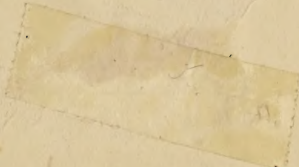
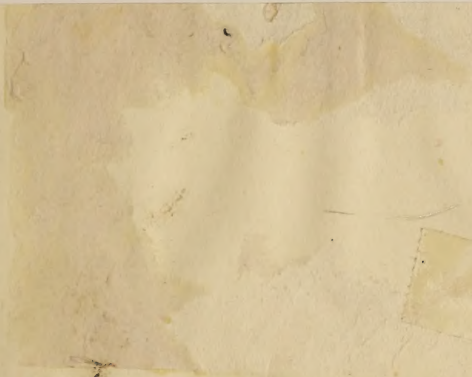


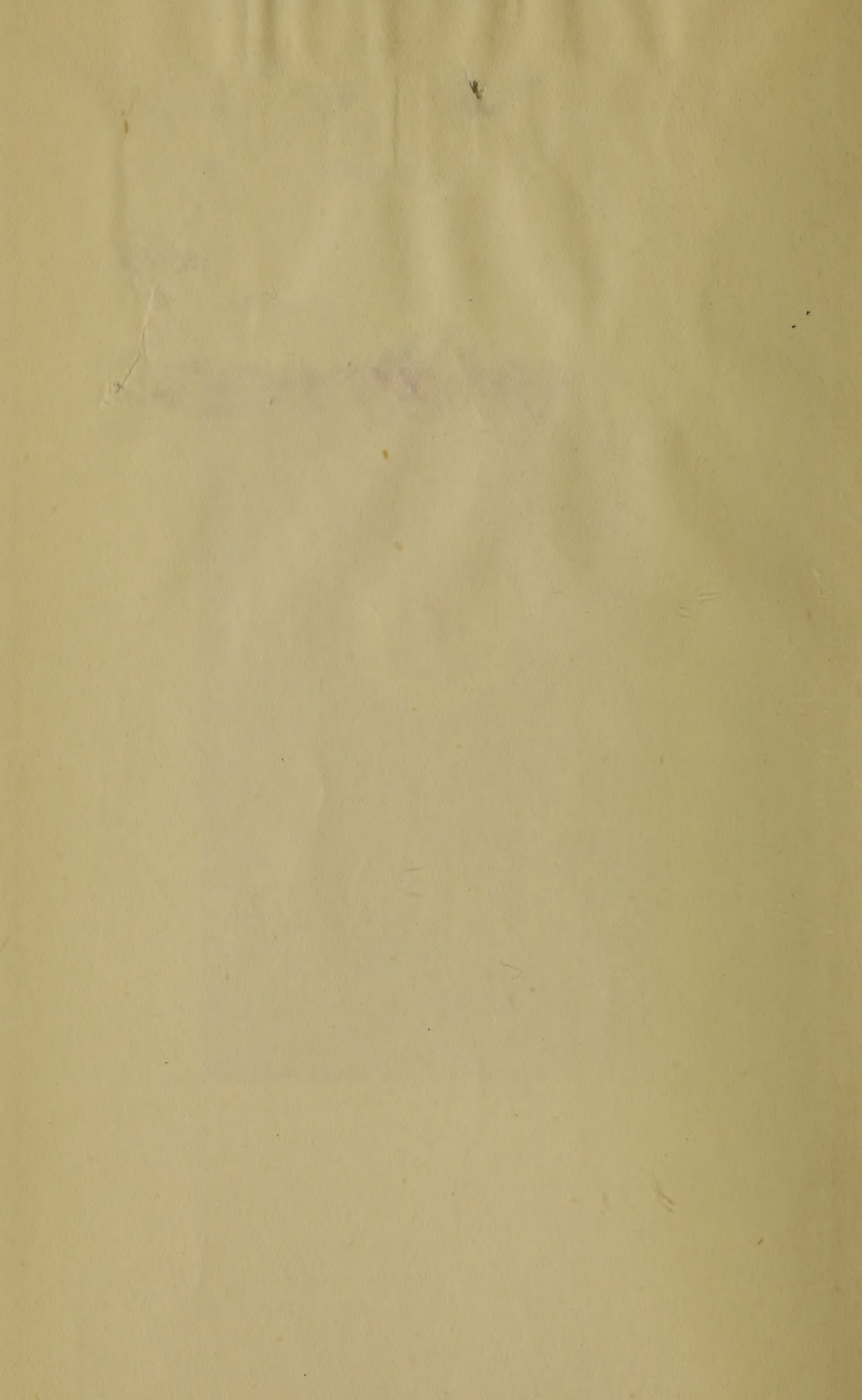


THE LIBRARY OF
YORK
UNIVERSITY



3 9007 0274 1294 9





THE ADVENTURE OF WRANGEL ISLAND

By the Same Author

THE FRIENDLY ARCTIC

MY LIFE WITH THE ESKIMO

THE NORTHWARD COURSE OF EMPIRE


HUNTERS OF THE GREAT NORTH

KAK, THE COPPER ESKIMO

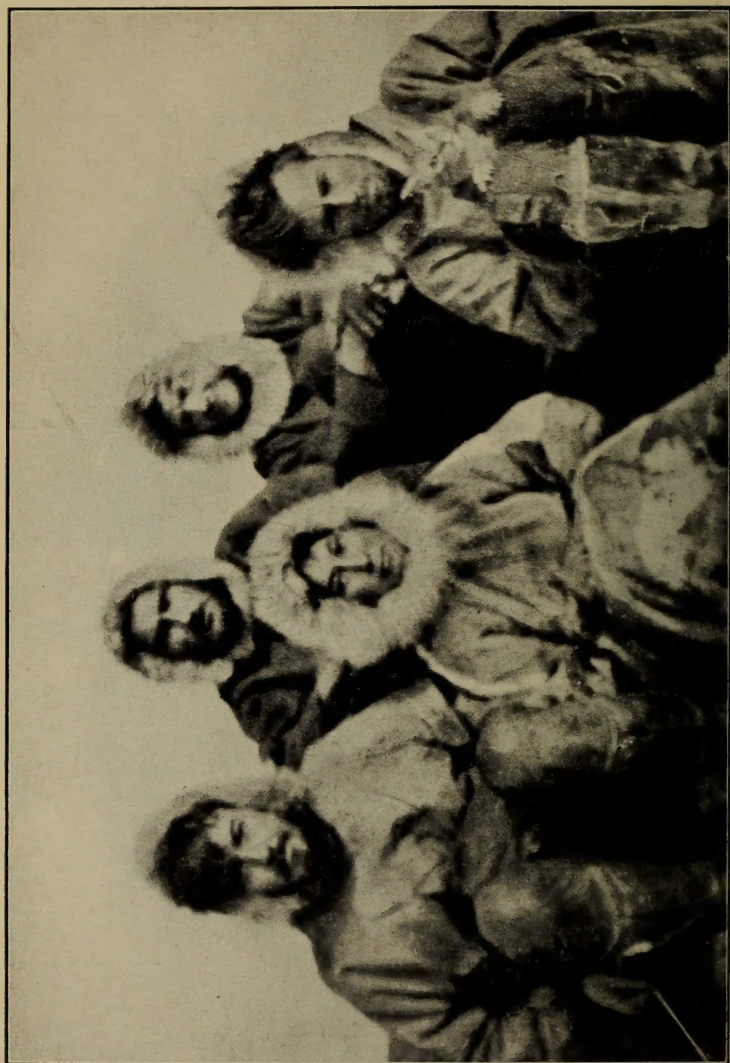
(in collaboration with VIOLET IRWIN)

NORTHWARD, HO!

(in collaboration with JULIA SCHWARTZ)



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2014



WRANGEL ISLAND 1922.

FRONT ROW LEFT TO RIGHT, CRAWFORD, ADA BLACKJACK AND GALLE. BACK ROW LEFT TO RIGHT, MAURER AND KNIGHT. CRAWFORD IS SEEN PULLING THE STRING TO OPERATE THE CAMERA.

THE ADVENTURE *of* WRANGEL ISLAND

Written by
VILHJALMUR STEFANSSON

with the Collaboration of
JOHN IRVINE KNIGHT
upon the Diary of whose Son
ERROL LORNE KNIGHT
the narrative is mainly based

With a Foreword by the Right Hon.

L. S. AMERY

P.C., M.P.



LONDON

JONATHAN CAPE LTD., 30 BEDFORD SQUARE

420a
S+32a
3500

FIRST PUBLISHED IN MCMXXVI
MADE & PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN
BY BUTLER & TANNER LTD
FROME AND
LONDON



G
830
S8
1926

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAP	PAGE
FOREWORD	9
PREFACE	13
INTRODUCTION, BY JOHN I. KNIGHT	23
1 THE BACKGROUND OF THE STORY	29
2 THE EARLY HISTORY OF WRANGEL ISLAND	41
3 THE FATAL DRIFT OF THE 'KARLUK'	55
4 THE SINKING OF THE SHIP AND THE JOURNEY ASHORE	69
5 THE SUMMER OF 1914 ON WRANGEL ISLAND	78
6 THE PLANNING OF THE NEW EXPEDITION	88
7 THE OUTFITTING AND THE VOYAGE TO WRANGEL	107
8 THE DIFFICULTIES OF 1922	128
9 THE SUMMER OF 1923 AND THE TRAGIC NEWS	149
10 EXPLANATION AND APOLOGY OF MR. HAROLD NOICE	169
11 THE FIRST AUTUMN ON WRANGEL ISLAND	174
12 THE FIRST WINTER AND THE SECOND SUMMER	198
13 THE SECOND WINTER AND THE TRAGIC END	216
14 THE DEVELOPMENTS OF 1924	267

APPENDICES

	PAGE
I THE FRAGMENTARY PAPERS OF MILTON GALLE	283
II ADA BLACKJACK	297
III THE REPORT OF CAPTAIN JOSEPH BERNARD ON THE RELIEF OPERATIONS OF 1922	323
IV THE VICISSITUDES OF THE WRANGEL ISLAND DOCUMENTS	328
V FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF THE CHARGE BY MR. HAROLD NOICE THAT ADA BLACKJACK WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEATH OF LORNE KNIGHT	356
VI SUMMARY OF THE HISTORY AND POLITICAL SITUA- TION OF WRANGEL ISLAND	370
VII PLOVER LAND	376
VIII DISCUSSIONS IN THE PARLIAMENT OF CANADA ABOUT WRANGEL ISLAND	389
IX THE RUSSIAN VISIT TO WRANGEL ISLAND	393
X STAKING WRANGEL ISLAND	395
XI THE CONTRIBUTORS TO THE WRANGEL ISLAND RELIEF OF 1923	411

ILLUSTRATIONS

	FACING PAGE
WRANGEL ISLAND PARTY, 1922	FRONTISPIECE
SPECIMEN PAGE FROM DIARY OF E. LORNE KNIGHT SHOW- ING ERASURE BY MR. HAROLD NOICE	26
ADA BLACKJACK WITH MR. AND MRS. J. I. KNIGHT	27
MAP OF WRANGEL ISLAND	44
THE BRITISH ADMIRALTY CHART AS IT WAS IMMEDIATELY AFTER CAPTAIN KELLETT'S DISCOVERIES WERE RE- CORDED ON IT	47
RECORD LEFT ON WRANGEL ISLAND BY THE 'CORWIN'	52
REVENUE STEAMER 'CORWIN'	53
STEFANSSON'S PARTY ABOUT TO LEAVE THE 'KARLUK,' SEPTEMBER, 1913	62
HADLEY BRINGING HOME A SEAL, EARLY SPRING OF 1914	
REAR-ADMIRAL ROBERT MALLORY BERRY, U.S.N., RE- TIRED	
CALVIN LEIGHTON HOOPER, CAPTAIN U.S. COASTGUARD SERVICE	63
JOHN MUNRO, CHIEF ENGINEER	
RAISING THE FLAG TO REAFFIRM THE BRITISH RIGHT TO WRANGEL	82
THE 'KARLUK' JUST BEFORE SHE SANK	
THE FLAG AT HALF MAST BY THE GRAVE OF GEORGE MALLOCH ON WRANGEL ISLAND, SUMMER, 1914	83
CRAWFORD, MAURER AND KNIGHT	128
WRANGEL ISLAND PROCLAMATION	129
THE MAIN CAMP. TAKEN FROM THE 'SILVER WAVE'	
EARLY SPRING—THE PRAIRIE PARTLY FREE OF SNOW BUT THE MOUNTAINS STILL AS IN WINTER	144
MAURER WATCHING FOR THE SHIP THAT COULD NOT COME	145
A CLUSTER OF FLOWERS, SUMMER, 1922	
EIDER DUCK ON WRANGEL ISLAND, SPRING OF 1922	168
MILTON GALLE, SUMMER, 1922	
TYPE OF SHELTER AGAINST WIND AND SUN USED ON THE SUMMER RECONNOITRING TRIPS	169

ILLUSTRATIONS

	FACING PAGE
THE CAMP IN LATE AUTUMN	
BUILDING THE SNOW WALLS FOR OUTER HOUSE WITHIN WHICH THE TENTS WERE TO BE PITCHED FOR WINTER	188
CRAWFORD, MAURER AND GALLE STARTING OFF FOR A HUNT	189
CRAWFORD AND THE EXPEDITION CAT	
THE PET OF THE EXPEDITION, NAMED VIC	196
FRED MAURER AND THE BABY ESKIMO GIRL, MAKPEK	197
DRIFTWOOD ON THE WRANGEL BEACH IN EARLY SPRING	
CRAWFORD AND MAURER CUTTING UP A WALRUS BARRELS FILLED WITH SEALS' FAT, AND INFLATED SKIN BAGS	208
THE DORY AND THE DOGS, SPRING, 1922	
'TRACKING' UMIK WITH DOGS ALONG SEA BEACH	
HAULING A UMIK ON A SLED	214
CONVERTING A SLED INTO A BOAT	
CROSSING LEAD IN A SLED RAFT	215
CRAWFORD WITH A BLOCK OF SNOW HE HAS JUST CUT FOR THE HOUSE BEING BUILT BY KNIGHT	
KNIGHT BUILDING SNOWHOUSE	232
THE FINISHED SNOWHOUSE	
CRAWFORD SETTING OUT FOR A TRAMP	
MAURER EQUIPPED FOR HUNTING	233
THE CANADIAN FLAG ON WRANGEL ISLAND, SUMMER, 1914	264
ADA BLACKJACK AT THE GRAVE OF LORNE KNIGHT	265
HADLEY AND MAURER JUST AFTER THEY WERE PICKED UP AT WRANGEL ISLAND	294
SPECIMEN PAGES OF THE MEMORANDA KEPT BY GALLE FROM WHICH HE LATER WROTE UP HIS REGULAR DIARY	295
KNIGHT WITH A MAMMOTH TUSK FOUND ON WRANGEL ISLAND	
SAWING FIREWOOD — MAURER AND PROBABLY KNIGHT	
ONE OF THE STOUT TEAM OF ALASKA DOGS WHICH ACCOMPANIED THE PARTY TO WRANGEL ISLAND	314
ADA BLACKJACK REMOVING BLUBBER FROM A SEALSKIN	
ADA BLACKJACK AND VIC ON THE 'DONALDSON'	
ADA BLACKJACK IN WINTER COSTUME	315
MAP OF THE NORTHERN HEMISPHERE	END OF BOOK

FOREWORD

MORE than any other living man Mr. Stefansson has been responsible for a change in our outlook upon the Arctic, a change destined to open a new epoch in world communications, and to exercise all the profound effect upon economics and politics that every such change has exercised in the past. Others may have made more sensational expeditions, though his own record of exploration is in itself a very remarkable one. But he has been in a peculiar sense the philosopher and the prophet of the coming era. Convinced by his own experience over many years of the falsity of certain current ideas about the Arctic, he has set himself to overthrow them and to replace them by that wholly new conception which he has set forth so interestingly both from the practical and from the historical point of view in *The Friendly Arctic* and in *The Northward Course of Empire*.

The first of these false ideas is the legend of the ever-frozen North, a legend encouraged by the search for the North Pole, conceived as an expedition through ever-increasing difficulties to the very maximum of cold and lifelessness, an adventure calling for infinite heroism, but of little practical utility. Mr. Stefansson has taught us, what we might have guessed ourselves from our own experience when we wander hundreds of miles south to the Engadine in search of snow and ice, that cold is as much a matter of elevation as of latitude. The Arctic lowlands are no colder in winter than Dakota, and as warm in their brief summer – brief in days though not in hours of sunshine – as most temperate countries. Their snowfall is not heavy – less than that of Scotland, says Mr. Stefansson – and it all melts in spring to give way to grassy and flowery meadows which support, or can be made to support, a large population of reindeer, musk ox, and other sturdy animals of potential economic value to man. After all, Greenland was for centuries after its discovery by Eric the Red an exporter of dairy produce to Europe. Mr. Stefansson is convinced by these facts that the Arctic north will gradually come to be opened up by the advance of

civilization, and that our descendants will smile at our notions of Arctic Canada as we smile at the ideas of the ancients about Scotland or Scandinavia.

The second of the prepossessions which he sets out to destroy is that for which Mercator is chiefly responsible by the suggestion which the ordinary Mercator's world map conveys, that the Arctic regions are not only uninhabitable but of almost boundless extent. As a matter of fact, the Arctic Ocean is the smallest of the oceans, a mere Mediterranean, in fact. It would indeed be peculiarly entitled to that designation, for it is practically at the centre of the land hemisphere. Once an easy means of traversing it is devised its wonderful central situation is bound to make it one of the world's great highways. Aviation clearly indicates the means, and Amundsen's successful flight to within a few miles of the Pole shows that the practical opening up by airship of the great Northern routes across the world is not very far distant.

If so, then many places in the polar regions may be not only eventually habitable, but have their 'positional value' from the point of view of these air routes. Such a value is attached, in Mr. Stefansson's opinion, in an especial degree to Wrangel Island, conveniently situated as it is on the air line from London to Tokio. The nature of the British claim to that island, both by early discovery, and in virtue of its occupation by Mr. Stefansson's comrades of the *Karluks*, is set forth in the present work, which gives the story of Mr. Stefansson's further attempt to strengthen that claim and to test the economic resources of the island. The adventure ended tragically. The four gallant young men to whom Mr. Stefansson entrusted the task perished, and only the evidence of an Eskimo woman and the diary of one of them, Lorne Knight, remained to give at any rate a part of the story. The tragedy was in no sense inevitable, or even probable. There was nothing to prevent the whole party, if it had kept together, spending several years on Wrangel Island in safety. But three of them went off, after the first winter, across the ice to let Mr. Stefansson know how they had fared,

FOREWORD

and must have come to grief by one of those accidents that on more than one occasion so nearly befell Mr. Stefansson on similar expeditions. The fourth, Lorne Knight, was ill, far more seriously so than the others realized, and eventually died. Whether he might have lived till the relief party came if the Eskimo serving-woman, his only companion, had been a more skilful hunter and secured more fresh meat is an open question. Knight's diary and the present book certainly clear away the wild and unpleasant stories that were first circulated in the American Press, and leave only a simple story of quiet heroism and a sad ending.

Since then Wrangel Island has been occupied by the Soviet authorities, after removing the little party of Eskimo under Captain Wells whom the relief expedition left there. The British Government, in the course of the abortive negotiations for a treaty with Soviet Russia last year, waived its claim. Wrangel Island, as such, may have lost its interest for us. But the conception which inspired the undertaking described in this volume and the spirit of the brave youths who carried it out matter very much indeed to us as a nation and an Empire, and give permanent interest to the simple narrative of an unsuccessful adventure.

September, 1925.

L. S. AMERY

NOTE FOR THE ENGLISH EDITION

THE decision of the British publishers to hold this book for their autumn list has given some opportunity for further revision of the text.

The book, in its manuscript form, was submitted to all the four families concerned. Certain additions and corrections were suggested by the families of Milton Galle and Frederick Maurer, and they have been incorporated. The collaboration of Mr. J. I. Knight, the father of Lorne Knight, proved so important that, as elsewhere stated, he is now really a co-author of this book.

But the family of Allan Crawford were unwilling to give any help in the preparation of the book. Since the other three families and myself felt sure everything we were saying was not only true but provable, we were hopeful that all of us who are most intimately concerned would eventually find ourselves in agreement. But, to our deep regret, the appearance of this book in Canada was followed by a public statement from Mr. J. T. Crawford, the father of Allan Crawford, expressing disagreement on several important points.

The text of this book gives the impression that it speaks not only for me, but for all the four families concerned. In fairness to the public, we must therefore state that it does not in some respects represent the views of the family of Allan Crawford, though it is correct to the best of the knowledge and belief of the other three families and myself.

July 15th, 1925.

VILHJALMUR STEFANSSON

PREFACE

THIS book has been written under difficulties that are not ordinary. Crawford, Galle, Knight, Maurer and I were friends and disciples of a common faith; two of them had been with me on a former expedition through illness, hunger, and shipwreck. Now they are dead, and I have had to write their story. In that writing I found myself continually handicapped by too strong a sympathy for the aims of the work I was describing, and too personal an affection for the heroes of that stern adventure. Fearing I might say too much, I have, I fear, said too little, especially about the nobility and unselfishness of their motives. They were patriots in the Canadian and the Imperial sense through what they did; but in their minds was a larger patriotism, for they believed in the coming unification of the English-speaking peoples, and thought that whatever they might do either for the Empire or for the United States they would be doing for both. They were gallant adventurers in the Elizabethan meaning of that word, pioneers whom we have all the more reason to admire now that their frontier type is gradually disappearing from every country under the softening influence of our coddling civilization.

I was, then, handicapped in the writing of this book by the fear that my sympathies might lead me into what would seem over-zealous advocacy or intemperate praise. Obsessed by that fear, I have been led into the contrary error of hiding my sympathies too well and writing as if I did not myself see the heroism and glowing romance between the lines of the mutilated and tragic diary of Lorne Knight. That defect of over-restraint, clear now too late when the book lies printed before me, I must at least explain in this preface written at the last moment.

We five were dreamers who would not believe what some told us, that the romance of territorial expansion by discovery and colonization is now a century out of date. So we planned exploits like those of Drake and John Smith and Captain Cook. We saw no reason why such adventures should cease,

P R E F A C E

for the world still has an uncolonized fringe in the north, and beyond it lies the last remnant of the geographically unknown. Every book on international law we could find said that an island previously uninhabited and beyond the defined limit of any country's territorial waters belonged to the nation that first effectively occupied it, and doubly so if the occupying nation happened to be the one which discovered it. We knew of an island a hundred miles from any occupied country, British by discovery, American by first exploration, and now unoccupied by any nation. We decided to colonize that island to prevent some third nation from making it legally theirs by occupying it ahead of us.

We found no authority who doubted the British right to plant a colony, but it seemed that the Canadian Government, in whose service three of us had already discovered and explored arctic lands, did not consider Wrangel Island worth the bother of colonizing. We may have understood the Government wrongly, for I did not have a chance the summer of 1921 to talk with the Prime Minister or Cabinet, and letters are unsatisfactory. But we felt sure that on the same legal basis they would have colonized an otherwise correspondingly placed tropical island. In other words, we thought they agreed with us on law and ethics but not on the commercial and strategic values of Wrangel Island. But we five were as sure of the value of the island as we were of the law and the rights of the case, and we thought all men would come to agree with us on every point when they learned the facts we knew. In that, again, we may have been mistaken; but we could act only on what we thought. We were enthusiastically willing to do so. One of us, Fred Maurer, had dug at Rodgers Harbour the graves on which rested a small part of our legal and a big part of our moral claim to Wrangel Island. In his romantic moods he used to say he wanted to go back there and watch beside the crosses which he had raised over the graves of his comrades until the nation they died for began to see some meaning in their death.

We were all romantic and eager — three of us from the

start and Crawford and Galle later. What led to action was that the four of them eventually said to me in effect, 'Help us to get to Wrangel Island. We'll continue the legal occupation until you convince the Government it will pay them to stand on their legal rights. If you can't swing Ottawa, you'll have better luck in the Old Country.'

So started our glorious adventure. It seems glorious to me still, though it has become tragic on their part, and may easily become a failure on mine. They knew it was dangerous, but they did not expect to die; I knew it was difficult to convince busy politicians of so new an idea as the value of an arctic island for a flying base, but I did not expect to fail. In that spirit we agreed that we would pool all the money we had; with it they would buy in Seattle and Nome as much as they could of what they liked for an outfit and go North without letting their plans be known. As to equipment, the choice was their own, for they and not I were going, and Knight and Maurer had almost as much experience in the Arctic as I. Maurer had even been six months on Wrangel itself, while neither Knight nor I had ever seen it. In certain matters of plan and equipment, Maurer was therefore our guide and court of last resort.

Some friends who have read the proofs of this book as it was going through the press have said that the narrative makes it plain why I remained South while Crawford, Galle, Knight and Maurer went North; others say this needs clearer restatement, and perhaps it does.

From the point of view of the four who went, the reason I stayed behind was that such was the division of labour upon which we had agreed on the basis of what we thought of each other's capacities. They were as well qualified as I to go North to hold our political rights in Wrangel Island, while I was supposed to be better fitted than any of them to convince the Government meantime that our rights were worth holding. The result may have showed that I was not well chosen for the subdivision of the common task that was assigned to me; he who reads this book will see that they succeeded far better than I.

P R E F A C E

Besides agreeing with my colleagues as just outlined, I had reasons of my own for not going. I had already served in arctic exploration longer than any well-known explorer — I had spent ten arctic winters, as against nine for Peary, who had previously held the record for polar service, and as against seven polar winters (arctic or antarctic), the highest record, so far as I know, for any living commander of polar expeditions.

In a way my length of arctic service was a reason for staying at home; and still not a good one, for he who loves his work, and the field of his work, should not retire till he has become useless. But there were good reasons. If I succeeded in getting Government or influential private backing, I wanted to be south to organize a comprehensive arctic expedition, or series of expeditions. But whether I succeeded or failed in that, I wanted to remain south to continue my campaign of education with regard to the arctic regions. I wanted especially to try to reform the arctic sections of the geography textbooks, and in general to influence school and university teaching. This seemed to me not only a duty to science but also particularly my duty toward my native land, Canada, whose future depends so much on what the arctic portions of her territory are worth, and on how soon their real nature can be understood and taken advantage of.

If I were to write here all my reasons for not going North in 1921, this introduction would turn into a prospectus of my hopes and plans for the rest of my life. That would not interest the reader. What I have said, when coupled with the narrative of the book, will surely make it clear enough why I stayed when my associates sailed away.

And who could be better qualified for going North than the four young men who went? Galle was only nineteen, it is true, but if you had seen him you would not have thought him too young. At seventeen, Martin Kilian of my 1913-18 expedition had proved himself one of our good men; Peary had found Borup at twenty-three one of the best men he ever had.

Crawford at twenty seems a little young, only because he

was to be called commander. But history is full of commanders and great leaders of various sorts who were at that age or near it. Alexander Hamilton was nineteen when he became one of the prime movers in the American Revolution. That was no mere flash in the pan due to accident, for the more his work is studied by historians the more his stature grows in comparison with that of his colleagues and contemporaries. Alexander the Great was twenty when he took command of the armies and began his conquest of the ancient world. Lesser but famous captains in the armies of nearly every country have been young men. William Pitt was Chancellor of the Exchequer at twenty-three, and Prime Minister, a more difficult task than the command of a polar expedition, at twenty-four. And Pitt was a real premier. Crawford proved a real commander, too, though he was placed in authority for tactical reasons only, as this book will tell.

Either Knight at twenty-eight with four years of hard and varied arctic training, or Maurer at twenty-nine with scarcely less experience, should have been the commander. And they really were commanders, in the sense that Crawford promised – and later kept the promise – to do everything by their advice. It was really a smoothly working committee-of-the-whole which governed the expedition. There was a theoretical danger that such extreme democracy might not work. We need theorize no longer, for the records are in. We now know that democracy worked on Wrangel Island, that co-operation never failed through the two years, and that the comrades were faithful to their trust and loyal to each other literally unto death.

There is some slight hope – very slight – that other records of the Wrangel Island expedition may be found to supplement our present knowledge. But, practically, we may feel that the evidence is all in. We are not afraid to place the case unreservedly in the hands of the jury of public opinion, as we do in this book. We who live have much to regret; they who died have nothing they could have wished to conceal.

P R E F A C E

Neither in this preface nor anywhere in any way can I offer adequate thanks or show sufficient admiration for the manner in which the crushing loss of son, husband, or brother has been borne by the relatives. But I can at least thank especially the families of the two veterans, Lorne Knight and Frederick Maurer, for their tireless efforts to lessen the grief of the parents of the younger men, Allan Crawford and Milton Galle, by sharing with them the better understanding of arctic life and conditions which they had secured from their explorer sons when they had been at home in the intervals between their expeditions. For Knight had been north with me four years between 1915 and 1919 and Maurer had been in the Arctic twice, the second time with me when he was shipwrecked on Wrangel Island itself in 1914.

With a heart too full for words in any case, I have attempted in this book no eulogy of the dead. Their actions and worthy motives are their best monument. What their thoughts and deeds were is shown by the fragments of records we have received from Crawford, Galle and Maurer, and especially by the one preserved diary, that of Lorne Knight, upon which this book is mainly based. Through his laconic narrative, so frank that he evidently never even asked himself whether he was being frank, there stand out clear the personalities of four gallant gentlemen who remained staunch comrades through two difficult years of isolation. A record that is complete and matter of fact to the bitter end shows that not once did even one of them shirk a task or a responsibility. That this is no mere rhetoric the scholars of the world will eventually have a chance to see for themselves, for we shall present photostat copies of Lorne Knight's diary to one or more leading libraries in England, Canada, and the United States, and copies also of all the other records. The general frankness of the diary is such that the reader is unable to doubt that if there had been troubles or recriminations they would have been set down. That there were none to record is nearly, if not quite, unique in polar exploration. Many expeditions have concealed their bickerings; few have had none to conceal.

P R E F A C E

I always had great confidence that the Wrangel Island Expedition could trust the verdict of anyone who knew every action and motive. With that constantly before me I have tried, in writing this book, not only to be frank, but also to give the reader a chance to look deeper if he wants to and convince himself that we really have been frank. Within the limits set by my capacity and by the hurry and worry of composing a book before a certain date while at the same time fighting for the possession of some of the documents on which the story had to be based (as explained farther on in this book) – within these limits I had already done my best to tell the reader the whole truth, when I got, strangely late, an idea that should have been in my mind at the very first.

One man now living knows more than any other about the planning of the Wrangel Island Expedition and the relation to it of its four members – John I. Knight, the father of Lorne Knight. Not only had he heard his son talk for year after year about the varied experiences of his first four seasons in the Arctic and about his hopes and plans of further arctic work, but he knew also Fred Maurer and Milton Galle, who had visited his home at McMinnville, Oregon, as guests of his son. Although Maurer had been there for fewer days than Galle had been weeks, I knew that both Mr. and Mrs. Knight had formed a personal affection for them both. They knew Allan Crawford only through a day's visit and through their son's enthusiastic report, but even so the relation was personal. Mr. Knight knew what both his son and Fred Maurer thought of the arctic expedition of 1913–18 of which they had been members, and what they thought of me who had been their commander then and was planning with them now a new expedition. Here was a man whose point of view the reader would value more than that of any other. And yet I had been planning until the last moment to get some famous authority on geography or world politics to read my manuscript and write an introduction for this book!

When it occurred to me to ask Mr. Knight to write the

P R E F A C E

introduction, I was just taking ship for Australia. There was barely time for a letter to him, and no time to receive his answer. I asked him merely to let me know his decision in Australia, saying I would not have wanted to review the introduction before publication even had I been in America, but that I was now in any case unable to do so, for the book must go to the printer in less time than it takes to send a manuscript to Australia and get an annotated copy back. I shall not know, therefore, until after publication what comment Mr. Knight may choose to make on this book and on the expedition. But I have asked him to do what he can do so much better than I – to speak of his knowledge of his son's relations with his comrades both before the expedition and on it, and especially to quote what Lorne wrote about them in his letters home from Wrangel Island.

At the close I must speak once more of my gratitude to friends who have helped with money. I am trying to get for the appendix of this book from Mr. Griffith Brewer a full list of those who contributed to the sending of the *Donaldson* to Wrangel Island in 1923. By looking in the appendix the reader may see if it has been possible to make up this list. A. J. T. Taylor and John Anderson, of the Combustion Engineering Corporation, Toronto, Canada, have had the thankless task of handling nearly all the outfitting and other commercial affairs of the Expedition. Their motives, aside from personal friendship, have been only those of a firm belief in the wisdom and importance of what we were trying to do; their only possible reward the same as that of the rest of us – the consciousness of having done their utmost for a cause they believe in. Lomen Brothers, of Nome, Alaska (especially Ralph Lomen), have handled all our Alaskan affairs without pay – the outfitting of the *Silver Wave* in 1921, the *Teddy Bear* in 1922, and the *Donaldson* in 1923. The late Sir Edmund Walker, president of the Canadian Bank of Commerce, who helped to finance my first expedition to the Arctic in 1906, gave the largest Canadian contribution to the Wrangel Island Expedition and supported us in every way. For England I must mention that

P R E F A C E

Colonel L. S. Amery,¹ not only contributed himself but secured for us contributions from others to the amount of more than £600. Several friends in the United States made me unsecured personal loans. It was Orville Wright of Dayton, Ohio, who loaned me the money which enabled us to outfit the *Teddy Bear* in 1922 a week before we got the grant from the Canadian Government. As stated elsewhere, Griffith Brewer of 33 Chancery Lane, London, loaned me (against anticipated public subscriptions) the money which outfitted the *Donaldson* in 1923, a loan which turned out to be considerably in excess of the receipts through subscriptions, so that we are still heavily in his debt.

VILHJALMUR STEFANSSON

SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA.

May 28th, 1924.

POSTSCRIPT

Many things have changed since I wrote the above preface in Australia. To begin with, we have received a retraction (from the author of certain misleading newspaper stories about the Wrangel Island Expedition) in exchange for which we agreed to re-edit the book. This has delayed publication another six months.

The book did not go to press as I had anticipated (without my seeing Mr. Knight's introduction) while I was still absent in Australia. When I returned to the United States and saw the introduction, I got his permission to move certain parts of it into the body of the narrative. He has also since then read my manuscript over carefully and made valuable suggestions for changes. As time wore on his collaboration became so important that he is now in reality a co-author of this book — a very proper relation, since he understood our general arctic plans even before the party went north (though he did not know about their application to Wrangel Island). A still more important reason for his

¹ Now Minister for the Colonies.

P R E F A C E

appearing as co-author is that the book depends mainly on his son's diary and other papers – for the records of Crawford and Maurer were lost, as were most of Galle's records.

When Mr. Knight and I decided to take joint responsibility for the whole of this book as co-authors, it was too late to change to 'we' all the frequent personal pronouns. But the reader will not be greatly confused. I am writing this second preface just on going to press, and Mr. Knight has not seen it. His name is specially signed to the introduction only, and he composed outright only a few other things. But there are important cases where I have modified my statements according to his suggestions, and he has just signified to me by telegram his desire that we shall be held equally and jointly responsible for everything that either of us has said.

NEW YORK,
February 16th, 1925.

VILHJALMUR STEFANSSON

INTRODUCTION

IN presenting this book to the world, Mr. Stefansson has been compelled to labour under the most trying circumstances possible, because of conditions created by the reprehensible conduct of Mr. Harold Noice and the strong public and private feelings that have been born of his newspaper misrepresentation of the facts concerning the Wrangel Island expedition.

I believe that in writing this book Mr. Stefansson has been actuated by one single desire, to do full and impartial justice to all with whom he has to deal.

I believe that one of the chief reasons for the partly or wholly wrong ideas held by the public is a lack of a comprehensive understanding of the situation in the great expanse of the North. When the news of the tragedy of Wrangel Island first came to me even I, too, was confused notwithstanding the fact that, having had a son in the Arctic from 1915 until 1919, I had kept a close watch on all that was published of the northern portion of the world, had always kept a map hanging handy so I could study the geography of the Arctic, and had learned a great deal more of that land than the average citizen. I deemed myself to have a pretty good understanding of the situation. Yet, when I talked later with many who had had personal experiences there, I realized that there was a vastness about the whole Northern area that made it very easy for me to form an erroneous conception of the conditions. I am slower now to say that such a man should have done so and so, and another should not have done as he did do.

My son, Errol Lorne Knight, on whose diary this book is chiefly based, had had some wonderful experiences when he was with Mr. Stefansson for four years in the Arctic on a previous expedition, and they all pass through my mind in a kaleidoscopic view as I write this introduction.

In 1915, Lorne went north as a member of the crew of the whaling schooner *Polar Bear*, Captain Louis L. Lane, owner and master, for a season's whaling in the Arctic. On August

INTRODUCTION

17th, the ship connected with Mr. Stefansson at Cape Kellett, on Banks Land, and was bought by him. Thus Lorne became a member of the Canadian Arctic Expedition. His discharge was dated, to a day, four years after his enlistment.

In company with Mr. Stefansson, Lorne, Mr. Noice and an Eskimo travelled over the ice to a point at 80 degrees 28 minutes North, in the spring of 1917. On this trip, Noice was the first to develop scurvy, but Lorne developed the same a few days later, and they came near dying from the disease. I am convinced that had it not been for the recurrence of this disease in Lorne, on Wrangel Island, there would have been no tragedy, because the party would have been able to survive the difficulties of living off the country if he had kept well.

I base my opinion for this assertion on the fact that Lorne was none the worse for the experience of scurvy in 1917, for travelling the same summer on the ice, when he waded from knee to waist-deep for hours each day in the water on top of the ice, for having lain in a snow house for nine days with frozen feet, with no food except raw oatmeal, while a blizzard raged outside, and for having gone with Storker Storkerson and three other companions more than two hundred miles North from the north coast of Alaska, where they took up their home on a floating field, or floe, of ice, living there and drifting with the winds from March until November. During the time of their stay on the ice floe, they had six weeks' provisions lashed on their sled for travel, but this was not touched, and they lived entirely from the food furnished by seals and polar bears which they killed, returning to the north coast of Alaska the day the armistice was signed. This shows Lorne's physical qualities and the kind of schooling he had been through before he went to Wrangel Island.

During all of these experiences, his faith in Mr. Stefansson was 100 per cent, and continued so throughout all the time he was home; and it was based on this faith that the statement has been made that they staked their lives on each other, and that, 'if Mr. Stefansson should say that he would

INTRODUCTION

meet Lorne on the moon at a fixed date, if it were possible, Lorne would be there, because he would know that "Stef" would be there too.'

It was this faith that caused him to stake his life on an enterprise backed by Mr. Stefansson.

It seems that the situation on Wrangel Island developed unusual qualities in Allan Crawford, because Lorne says, in his diary, that he will 'put Crawford against anyone he ever knew, old or young, except Stefansson.' That is the highest tribute he could pay his companion.

In saying this, he had no idea of discounting the qualities of Maurer and Galle, his other two companions. I have his diary in its original form, written by himself (all except the pages which have been torn out, and paragraphs erased by Mr. Noice under the circumstances which Mr. Stefansson explains in the appendix to this book), and in it all there is not a single word of complaint or criticism of the men he had been associated with through the solitude of one and a half years in the fastness of the Arctic.

I had the good fortune to know Milton Galle, a lad of twenty with a brilliant mentality and a charming personality, when he lived with us in our home for a few weeks before they left for Wrangel Island. I met Frederick Maurer at my home, where Lorne brought him from his Chautauqua lectures, and I liked him. Allan Crawford, Lorne brought to our home, where Lorne's mother took great pride in preparing a splendid dinner for him and Mr. Stefansson. Milton Galle was there spending a week with us. This day, for an hour or so, is all that I was ever permitted to be in company with Allan Crawford. This occasion and the presence of all of the boys, except Frederick Maurer, will always be a bright recollection. What an enjoyable two hours we had together!

I want to pay my respects to Harold Noice with regard to the narratives and charges concerning the Wrangel Island expedition which he has broadcasted through the newspapers. When he returned from Wrangel Island in 1923 with the startling news of the tragedy, he appropriated

INTRODUCTION

Lorne's diary and sold it for his own gain, he mutilated it, and gave a colouring to his writings which was unfair to the unfortunate boys and painful to their people. In one paragraph he speaks of Lorne as his 'Pal,' his 'Trailmate,' and his 'Friend,' but, in the next paragraph, he refers to him in uncomplimentary terms indicating his inferiority to himself.

Together with the diary which Mr. Noice appropriated, were other papers, among them a personal letter which Lorne had been writing to his mother over a period from November, 1921, until August, 1922. Mr. Noice pilfered this also, and kept it from us until he had made what use of it he could, returning it after several months, the heading torn off the first page and otherwise mutilated. What can I say of a man who will thus desecrate a private letter of a dead boy written to his mother?

Special tribute is due the unusual quality of the big-hearted manhood and sympathetic philanthropy of that English gentleman, Griffith Brewer. When I first heard of his generosity I supposed him to be interested only in the brave, romantic, and unselfish work of the four men on Wrangel Island. I thought he was merely wanting to help them to success or to prevent them from paying for their courage with their lives. But I have just learned that Mr. Brewer and Lorne had met at the home of Orville Wright at Dayton, Ohio, when Lorne and Mr. Stefansson were visiting there the winter of 1921. Mr. Brewer says that this gave him an added personal interest in the party, turned the scales in his mind, and induced him, not a wealthy man, to advance £2,500 to finance the trip of the *Donaldson* to the Island for the relief of the boys. The fact that the *Donaldson* was too late to save the lives of the party in no wise dims the lustre of his generous deed.

This book deals with a great many activities, both in the wilds of the Arctic regions and in civilization, in the United States, in Canada and in London, and especially with the political influences on the explorers and with the journeys of the individuals, but the inspiration for the book, the foundation of it, and the pivot around which it revolves is the group

Nov 30.0

Nov 11.6

Today
we hauled in & cut wood. I started to make
a sled for wood hauling out of lumber
brought from Nome. The sea covered with
young, broken up ice. Fresh breeze from
the East. Warm. Partly clear.

Nov 3

Nov 30.5

Nov 16.5

Monday
Crawford and I, each with a back pack
started at 1 P.M. for the mountain to climb.
The large mountain north of our camp. We have
been calling this mountain "Berry Peak" as shown
on the map, but East of us can be seen another
mountain, which may be "Berry Peak", and until
we are sure of our location we do not know which
is which. The explorers will leave a record
and monument on the mountain and Crawford
intends to do some geological work. I worked
on the wood sled & Mammie put in a floor in
the tents of split logs. Cloudy & light breeze
from the N. E. Sea is ice covered to the horizon.



ADA BLACKJACK WITH MR. AND MRS. J. I. KNIGHT, THE PARENTS OF LORNE KNIGHT, AT THEIR HOME IN MCMINNVILLE, OREGON.

of four young men and an Eskimo woman isolated on an arctic island. Allan R. Crawford, whose record shows up so well through Lorne's diary, was Commander. E. Lorne Knight was officially Second-in-Command, but his ideas gained through four previous years of stern arctic experiences on Stefansson's last expedition, controlled the party. Frederick W. Maurer was also a veteran who had spent two summers and a winter as an arctic whaler with Stephen Cottle, one of the most famous of New England whaling captains, and then two other arctic summers and a winter with Stefansson — an invaluable preparation, especially as six months of it had been on Wrangel Island itself. And well did he make use of that experience and of excellent natural qualifications, as Lorne's diary shows, and as this book shows since it follows the diary. Milton Galle seemed to us promising when he visited his friend, our son Lorne, at our home while the expedition was being planned, and the record in Lorne's diary and Crawford's letter show that he measured up to every expectation. Ada Blackjack went along as a seamstress, for in the Arctic no white men's clothes are half as good as those the Eskimos make. After the death of our son, whom she did her best to nurse safely through his last illness, she visited his mother and me at our home. I shall not attempt to express here my warm feelings for her, because Mr. Stefansson has incorporated into the main body of this book¹ what I think of her, of the charges against her published by Mr. Noice, and (so far as I want to express it in print) what I think of Mr. Noice for making through the newspapers such cruel and unfounded accusations.

The tragedy of Wrangel Island was the culmination of an enterprise which was conceived by those who undertook it, as well as by Mr. Stefansson who was financing it. They appreciated the disadvantages under which they were going north, the limited financial resources of Mr. Stefansson, and the chances that the Canadian Government might not come to his support. They limited themselves in equipment and supplies, but they were all willing and glad to take their

¹ In the present edition this material has been placed in the Appendix.

INTRODUCTION

share of the chances. I believe that if they could be heard to speak now, not one of them would find any fault with any of their associates in the North or with Mr. Stefansson.

The heroism and fortitude of the four boys, all under thirty, with bright prospects for lives of unselfishness before them, can never be measured by dollars, it can never be appreciated by the World's peoples who shall enjoy the fruits of their great sacrifice, and it can only be understood as the price necessary for the advancement of civilization.

These boys went willingly and eagerly into the Arctic and, as far as we will ever know, there was no disagreement or discord among them; there is not a word of complaint or of controversy in all Lorne's diary, and, in spite of all the great sorrow we, their parents and relatives, must and do feel for their untimely loss, there is glory in their deaths, because they died as only real men die; none were yellow, none were quitters, and none were traitors to their companions or false to their trust.

JOHN I. KNIGHT

CHAPTER I

THE BACKGROUND OF THE STORY

THE story of Wrangel Island has developed into adventure and tragedy, but it began in a new scientific conception of the nature of the earth as a whole and the relative position and importance upon it of the so-called arctic regions. It hinges also upon the developments in aeronautics, which began twenty-one years ago last December, when the Wright Brothers flew at Kittyhawk, North Carolina.

'As impossible as flying' and 'as worthless as the Arctic' were solemn figures of speech at the beginning of our century. The first is now ridiculous; the second is beginning to be questioned even by the general public — otherwise the value and ownership of Wrangel Island would not have occupied so much space during the last two years in the newspapers, those faithful mirrors of the interests of the average man.

The newspapers have been telling us that at least three countries — Great Britain, the United States and Russia — have legal claims to Wrangel Island, and are either pressing those claims or considering whether the intrinsic or positional value of the island may justify pressing them later. Such public interest and such international negotiations would not be conceivable if the leaders of thought still held the ideas about the climate and character of the Arctic which were nearly universal twenty years ago. But, in spite of the change of thought of the last two decades, keen public interest would still remain unthinkable but for the recent developments in air transport.

Our views on air transport are new; but there is one sense in which our 'new' ideas about the Arctic are 400 years old.

Few beliefs have ever had such universal support as that of the flatness of the earth. It rested on the science of the day, on scripture as usually interpreted, and on common observation. No gibe that is now directed against those who believe the Arctic to be inhabitable and fairly pleasant is quite so amusing as those directed four hundred and forty

years ago against the advocates of the roundness of the earth, pointing out that in such a case the water would be spilled out of the wells in China and the Chinamen themselves would be walking like flies on a ceiling, with feet upwards and pigtailed hanging down.¹

But the nearly universal view of the earth's flatness received such a blow from the voyages of Columbus and Magellan that it was only another two hundred years until the majority of Europeans ceased laughing about the inverted Chinamen and began to favour the view that the earth was probably round.

If the masses were slow-minded, the reverse was true of the leaders, who quickly realized that if the earth were round it would be possible to reach Cathay by sailing west. They tried it; but the Americas barred the way, and the route to China around the Horn was both long and stormy.

For men in whose lifetime the world had changed from a pancake to a sphere, it was easy to throw by the board as well all the other geographical conceptions of the ancients. They forgot or disregarded the Greek and Roman doctrine that human and animal life was not possible in the remote North, and boldly reasoned that, since the earth was a sphere, you could reach China not only by sailing west, but also by sailing north. This led to a series of voyages perhaps the most gallant in recorded history. They were productive in terms of knowledge, but negative with regard to the main purpose of finding a short cut to the riches of the East.

When ice barred the way to ships steering directly north, the navigators felt their way east or west along the margin, hoping for a thoroughfare. Long after they had concluded

¹ This refers to the beliefs of the numerical majority at the time of Copernicus. Many scholars then believed in a spherical earth divided into four land quarters by two ocean streams, one equatorial, uncrossable because of heat that would burn ships and sailors, the other meridional, impassable because of various terrors. Among the scholars a small inner circle of what we now feel like calling real scientists believed the 'ocean stream' was crossable and that the other three-quarters of the earth could be reached by ships. For a full and lucid discussion of these and similar beliefs of the period, see *Geographical Lore of the Time of the Crusades*, by John Kirtland Wright (New York, 1925).

that a direct northerly route was impossible,¹ they cherished the hope of circumventing either North America or Asia by what were known as the North-west and North-east Passages. Many countries gave to that search a list of dauntless names, but Great Britain was honoured beyond them all in Hudson, Cook, Parry, McClintock, and a galaxy of lesser polar stars. The search continued hopeful, and for three centuries the Arctic was in men's minds a potential highway to the East. But seventy-five years ago that period of thought came to a full stop with the colossal tragedy of Sir John Franklin. No expedition ever sailed with higher hopes or equipment more sumptuously and carefully provided. Yet no one ever returned from the voyage, and the story is known only from the tiniest fragments of documents and from the scattered bones of a few of those who died.

The white and fearful wilderness, which the popular view down to the end of the Middle Ages had assigned to the northern portion of the earth (whether spherical or flat) had been banished from men's minds for three centuries in favour of a potentially navigable ocean joining, on a round world, Europe to the coveted East. But the Franklin tragedy gave the lifeless northern wastes of the ancients their second innings. The world was still round, but at the 'top' of it men now pictured to themselves an impassably frozen and desert ocean which no longer connected, but, instead, separated Europe and China.

Commercial endeavours have their roots in a firm optimism. Men hope for success, they hope for profit, and that general frame of mind colours everything they see. The old Icelandic sagas tell that the discoverers of Greenland in 983 named the country so 'thinking that colonists would all the more desire to go there if the land had a fair name.' When Eric the Red went among his Norse countrymen in search of colonists, he certainly told them no tales of hardship and

¹ This is only approximately correct, for the strange dogma of 'An Open Polar Sea' was held as late as 1870 by many who were then considered as sound geographical authorities. See especially *The Open Polar Sea*, by Isaac I. Hayes (New York, 1867).

terror, for he induced twenty-five ships to follow him from Iceland towards Greenland in 986, each loaded with men, women, children, dogs, cattle, horses, sheep, poultry, and household goods. Some of the ships were wrecked and some were driven back by storms, but fourteen got through, and that autumn about 700 colonists landed on the west coast of Greenland. That was a larger colony than the first contingent sent by England to Virginia, Massachusetts, or indeed to any of what became the thirteen American Colonies. And so well did they understand their new environment that they seem to have had in the beginning fewer hardships than the Pilgrims at Plymouth Rock. They built up at once in Greenland what we would now call a 'dairy industry.' Vatican documents show that the Popes of the Middle Ages knew that Greenland exported butter, cheese and wool to Europe, and that the dignitaries of the Church were thankful for the contributions which the Greenlanders made towards the support of the Crusades.

The early fur traders who sailed from England and France to Hudson Bay may have related a tall story now and then, but in the main they described the profits in furs and the feasibility of making money. It was probably the canny directors of the companies, sitting in European offices, who first devised the policy by which the later fur traders represented the country they were exploiting as a frozen wilderness — the directors knew that if farmers were to throng in, the fur animals would disappear. The early seventeenth-century voyage of Hudson to Spitsbergen started a gigantic whale-fishing industry which prospered for more than two hundred years, and again profits and the rosy aspect were on every tongue.

The North-west Passage was discovered by Sir John Franklin's expedition seventy-five years ago, and the North-east Passage by the expedition of Baron Nordenskiöld about thirty years later. Various commercial companies are gradually developing these waters, although the north-east and north-west passages in their entirety are seldom used.

With the Franklin tragedy a change came over the spirit

and motives of polar exploration. The explorers were thereafter no longer pioneers of commerce. They began to compete with each other not as men do in business, but, rather, as athletes in a race or sportsmen eager to be first to scale a mountain. This tended to revive the ancient and mediæval general conception that the Arctic was ferocious and barren.

With a passion for symmetry and simplicity, all but a few scholars now assumed that the 'Frozen Region' was approximately circular with a 'North Pole' for centre that corresponded to the top of a mountain. On this idea was based the struggle to reach the North Pole, it being assumed that he who got there first would correspond (on a far greater scale) to the man who first climbed Mont Blanc. We have evidence of this, not only in the firm general idea which still holds, but also in the definite utterances of those who were engaged in the race. Especially is this clear in the titles of their books, as Nansen's *Farthest North*, Peary's *Nearest the Pole*.

Both the participants in the game of Arctic exploration and the spectators who watched it through newspapers and books knew about the Gulf Stream and the warm north Atlantic drift. They knew that these and other influences make Reykjavik, Iceland, about as warm, on the average, in January, as Milan, Italy, and Christmas night on the north coast of Norway, eight hundred miles north of Scotland, warmer, on the average, than at Minneapolis, which is farther south than the middle of France. They knew, but did not realize, that these and similar things prevented the possibility that the North Pole could be anywhere near the centre of whatever icy area there might be in the Arctic. They had the data for calculating (if it had occurred to them to do so) that the North Pole is about four hundred miles from the centre of the floating ice that troubles Arctic navigators, and corresponds, therefore, to a spot half-way up the slope of a gigantic mountain and four hundred miles below its peak.

In recent years many have come to realize that the struggle to attain the North Pole was based on this misapprehension, and that the centre of the ice, called the Pole of Inaccessibility, is near 84° N. Latitude and 160° W. Longitude,

about four hundred miles away from the North Pole in the direction towards Alaska. There lies the still unscaled peak of the greatest physical achievement in the Arctic. We have come to understand also many things vastly more important. We realize that on the lowlands in the Arctic, both in North America and Asia, midsummer temperatures are sometimes as high as at the south tip of Florida (85° F. to 95° F. in the shade, and even hotter). We know that the snowfall in the Arctic averages less than in Scotland and that all the snow of winter disappears in summer from every arctic land except those that are mountainous – and most of the arctic lands are low.

We know there are many hundred species of flowering plants in the region formerly supposed to be covered by eternal ice and that there is more 'eternal ice' in Mexico than there is in an equal area of arctic continental Canada. We know that bees and butterflies go about among the midsummer flowers on the north coasts of the most northerly lands in the world. Peary tells us that a bumble-bee once met him out on the sea ice half a mile north from the most northerly coast-line in the world – that of Greenland.

But we might have in our minds all this and more of the new knowledge about the Arctic and still the realization of the hopes of the Middle Ages about a short route to the Far East might be as remote as ever. The climate is not eternally cold, for the summers are warm; the lands are not eternally ice-covered, for few of them are mountainous; the sea is not covered with one vast expanse of ice, for the ice is not strong enough to stand the strain of even a moderate wind, and is broken, in winter and summer alike, into millions of floes of varying sizes drifting about and jostling each other, with large patches of open water between them. All these things are true, and still it remains equally true that for ordinary ships the Arctic is not a navigable ocean on the direct route from Europe to the Pacific.

But there lies above the partly ice-filled water the wide unhampered ocean of the air, free to be navigated in every direction by ships of the air.

The more optimistic students consider that flying conditions over the Arctic throughout the year are, on the average, better than over the North Atlantic. The more pessimistic consider them probably worse, but conquerable. Those who hold a middle ground think that the Arctic is perhaps more favourable than the Atlantic in summer, but that it would be less favourable in winter. Some of the highest authorities have said that January flying across the Arctic will probably turn out to be not only easier than North Atlantic flying in January, but actually easier than arctic flying in July. The authorities differ partly because some think only of our flying technique as it is to-day. But there is likely to be as much progress in aviation during the next five years as there has been during the past five, and many of the difficulties of to-day will be conquered before 1930.

During more than eleven years of actual residence in the Arctic, the problems of the North were constantly before me, and I was therefore in a position to be one of the first to realize that the dream of the Elizabethan navigators was about to come true. The idea came to me vaguely about ten years ago; was put into print tentatively in *The National Geographic Magazine* for August, 1922, and more fully that same year in a book called *The Northward Course of Empire*. I had been urging it upon the Canadian Government in writing since 1918.

As we have said above, the difficulty in getting the ordinary educated person to take a fully rational view of the Far North is due partly to the recrudescence during the last seventy-five years of ancient beliefs about the polar regions. This is the fault of our school education. The Popes of Rome were in the habit of mentioning in bulls issued during the Middle Ages that Greenland exported butter and cheese, but the children of our schools to-day are in most places given the impression that Greenland is all covered with ice and snow. I have questioned a number of school children in England and Canada and have found them uniformly of that impression, although they are usually unable to say exactly where they got the idea. There is a popular song with the refrain

'For in Greenland there is nothing green, you know!' Other parts of the Arctic resemble even less than does Greenland the conventionally desolate North.

Another reason for the misconceptions about the Arctic is that few care to read anything about distant countries except stories of adventure. If you spend five years in Spain, you may find when you come back that your friend the editor does not care to print anything you have to say about climate or agriculture, but that he will be glad to publish an account of how you watched a bull-fight and what you thought of it. Similarly, an explorer may go through many placid years in the remotest Arctic to find that the editor does not care to print anything except the story of a narrow escape from being eaten by a polar bear. It is as if you were to tell Englishmen the story of a year in Chicago wholly in terms of the stockyards, motor accidents, and deaths from sun-stroke.

Probably the most insidious and effective opponent of a rational view of the earth is Mercator with his grotesque chart. The earth is flat in the idiom of our speech, it is flat when you look out through your window, and it is flat when you glance at a wall where hangs a map with Greenland looking twice as big as Australia, though it is only half as big, and with the north coasts of Alaska, Canada, and Siberia stretching horizontally from east to west. It is simple and natural to consider the earth as flat. The sailor knows how simple it is in theory to cross the ocean on the presumption of flatness, but he knows also that nobody but a fool would do it. Hence that picturesque expression 'plane sailing,' which describes a thing so easy that any fool can do it.

The navigators are among the few people who have to apply day by day their knowledge that the earth is round. Most of the rest of us seldom feel ourselves under the same compulsion. We speak of the 'top' of the earth, and we have on our wall Mercator's chart with Canada and Siberia at the top. We see the arctic islands lying between continents on one side and the ceiling on the other, and we get the idea that they lie between Canada and Siberia on one side and infinity

or nothingness on the other. This misleading presentation has actually led to the half-formulation of a doctrine of international law to the effect that one land belongs to another because of lying to the north. That would be logical if the earth were flat and had a farther edge. It looks logical on Mercator's chart, but the logic wholly disappears when you consider the map of the northern hemisphere. Such maps are rare. In the summer of 1923 I visited every well-known shop in London and was unable to buy a map of the northern hemisphere, except on a small and practically diagrammatic scale as a sort of footnote to a map of the eastern and western hemispheres. Even the finest map collections in the United States were without a good-sized map of the northern hemisphere until, in 1922, one was issued by the U. S. Weather Bureau, perhaps under pressure of the modern necessity of considering the northern half of the earth as a unit from the aeronautical point of view.¹

When we look at maps of the eastern and western hemispheres we are scarce better off. We do realize that the Arctic is not so huge as it seems on the flat Mercator, but it still remains at the top of the map and in so far confirms the Mercator illusion of its being at one end of the earth. Of course, there is nothing wrong about dividing the earth into eastern and western hemispheres. But neither is it wrong to picture the globe by northern and southern hemisphere maps, though it is seldom done. If we do it we see that the arctic frontier of the great land masses does not run in a straight horizontal line as on a Mercator, but forms instead a horseshoe. This horseshoe is much smaller than you would have thought, for the Arctic Ocean is tiny when compared with any of the other oceans. If it were dreadful and uncrossable by aircraft it could be avoided. If you cannot cross the Gobi Desert you can always go around it.

Maps of the northern and southern halves of the earth show that the great land masses of the world are in the northern hemisphere. It is important from the political and economic point of view (since we do not inhabit the ocean) that

¹ For a map of the entire northern half of the earth, see back of this volume.

the Arctic on such a map or on a globe looks like a hub from which the continents radiate like the spokes of a wheel. This gives it an immediate importance which is bound to increase as the settlements creep northward along the great Siberian and Canadian rivers. Major-General Sir Sefton Brancker, Director of Civil Aviation for Great Britain, said in a speech at Sheffield the summer of 1923, that carrying mails from England to Japan by way of the Arctic was a probability of the next ten years. Rear-Admiral William A. Moffett, chief of the Bureau of Aeronautics of the United States Navy, has announced that the American airship *Shenandoah* will cross the Arctic probably from Alaska to Europe,¹ and has said that 'it must be realized that polar routes by air connecting England, Japan, Alaska, and Siberia are possibilities in the near future and that they will be of incalculable value in cutting down time and distance between those points.' Since these men are in high authority in two of the most progressive countries of the world, what they have said is more significant than my having said the same thing a year earlier (August, 1922).² It takes either capitalists or men in authority in the air ministries of wealthy nations actually to bring the change about.

No single event ever caused such a profound revolution in human thought as did the voyage of Magellan around the world, for it transformed the earth from a stationary pancake, housed under a firmament, into one of a family of little spherical planets tagging along behind a somewhat larger sun on a possibly eternal journey through a perhaps infinite universe. When the new views of the Arctic get so firm a hold that they lead to action, as the Copernican doctrine of a round world led to the voyage of Magellan, then there is bound to follow a profound change of thought and outlook,

¹ Although the plan of a transarctic voyage has not been given up by the U.S. Navy, the wreck of the *Shenandoah* will prevent this particular airship undertaking the voyage.

² See chapter on 'Transpolar Commerce by Air' in *The Northward Course of Empire*, and article on same subject in *The National Geographic Magazine* for August, 1922.

not so profound as that of the Middle Ages, but nevertheless decisive enough to mark an epoch.

Or perhaps the coming change of thought is more exactly analogous to that connected with the development of ocean-going ships. From the earliest prehistoric times large bodies of water must have been considered to separate the lands ; but with the development of sea-borne commerce came the idea that the oceans connect the lands. Gradually this view got a firmer hold until it became a commonplace that a city a hundred miles in the interior was commercially and practically farther away than another a hundred miles across the sea. Were it not for the strictly modern development of railways, Pittsburgh would be farther from New York than London is. Similarly, air commerce will emphasize not only that the world is round from north to south, but also that the Arctic connects America and Europe quite as much as it separates them.

On our winter sledge journeys in the Arctic we are sometimes stormbound for days. Then we sit cosy in our snow-houses that are brightly lit and adequately heated by seal oil lamps which we trim so carefully that they produce neither smoke nor odour. On such occasions we speculate for hours upon things for which we do not spare minutes where telephones ring and cinemas lurk around every corner. The winters of 1914 to 1918 we used to talk a great deal about the coming era of northern development and the part which our respective countries would play therein. My companions were Canadians, Scots, Australians, Americans, Norwegians, South Sea Islanders — men from more than a dozen countries. We talked much of the importance of Spitsbergen, to which Britain then had (it seemed to us) a stronger claim than any other nation. From the British point of view (and in the absence of such secret information as may repose in Government archives), I have thought it one of the serious blunders of the Paris Conference that they gave away Spitsbergen to Norway, not one-half aware of its mineral riches, not one-fourth informed as to its real climate, and

apparently not at all conscious of its potential importance as a flying centre. From the point of view of Spitsbergen itself, it may be a blessing to be under an advanced country that is not too large to pay attention to it. To Norway the arrangement gives a wonderful pioneering opportunity. Although the group is not quite so strategically placed in the Arctic as the Hawaiian Islands are in the Pacific, I fancy it will not be more than two or three decades until air lines radiate from Spitsbergen somewhat as steamship routes do now from Honolulu.

We talked of various other arctic islands from this point of view and among them of Wrangel, the history, climate and resources of which we knew, and the importance of which seemed clear to us.

THE EARLY HISTORY OF WRANGEL ISLAND

THE history of Wrangel Island begins in the scientific theorizing of the early eighteenth century. At that time it was supposed that most of the Arctic was occupied by a great continent of which Greenland was one corner. Another corner was thought to lie undiscovered just north of the north-eastern coast of Siberia. An alternative view with similar implications was to the effect that the north-west corner of North America lay to the north of eastern Asia.

This was the time when the Russian Empire was expanding into Asia to form the country now politically described as Siberia, and the Czar's Government was more fully awake than the rest of Europe to the potential greatness of their Asiatic empire. It was only natural therefore that they should take interest in the theory of an arctic continent. Their traders listened carefully among the natives for legends about lands beyond the northern frontier of Siberia, and what they listened for they heard.

We now know that most of the natives of north-eastern Siberia and northern Alaska have the legend of a great land to the north of each of these countries. The late Sir Clements Markham, then President of the Royal Geographical Society of London, was much concerned about these stories as recently as the beginning of my own arctic work (1906). The first polar expedition of which I was a member (commanded by Leffingwell and Mikkelsen) was organized partly to test the view which Sir Clements favoured that the stories of land to the north of Alaska were reliable. The results of the Leffingwell-Mikkelsen expedition were negative. My own expedition of 1913-18 definitely proved that the 'land seen north of Alaska' was imaginary.

The prehistoric arctic trading centre of Nijnei Kolymsk took on new life with the increased Russian traffic and the natives of north-eastern Siberia frequented it even more than formerly. Some of these brought the story of a large inhabited land to the north of Cape Chelagskoi. Personally, I

consider that this was only the same sort of legend which we later disproved to the north of Alaska; but since it happens that there is an uninhabited island, if not an inhabited continent, north-east, if not north, from Cape Chelagskoi, it is possible to dispute indefinitely as to whether the stories which the Russians picked up were partly fact or wholly folklore.

To test the theory of a northern continent, Andreyev, a Cossack, made a journey in 1763 north from the mouth of the Krestvaya. From one of the Bear Islands he saw 'to the eastward' a large land which he took to be an island. But a journey was made in the same region six years later by the Russian surveyors, Leontev, Lisev, and Pushkarev, who established the fact that there is no land east of the Bear Islands near enough to be seen from them. After extensive travels in the same region nearly forty years later still, Wrangel gave it as his opinion that Andreyev had probably been looking south-east rather than east and that what he saw was a part of the mainland of Asia.

When he came to the conclusion that Andreyev had seen no land other than Asia, Lieutenant Ferdinand Wrangel was on a journey to test the theory and the reports of a northern continent which were still believed by his employers, the Russian Government at Petrograd. He had travelled overland to the mouth of the Kolyma with orders to make a journey out upon the sea ice and to plant the Russian flag upon the supposed corner of the supposed continent.

Wrangel arrived at the mouth of the Kolyma in 1820. During the three years following he made journeys north-west, north and north-east over the winter sea ice searching for land. His route map shows that one of his parties once came within forty or fifty miles of where we now have Wrangel Island on the chart, but they saw no land. They picked up again, however, the native story that land had been seen, and they made, in April, 1824, a very creditable effort to reach by sled the place where the land was said to be. On being compelled to turn his sledges back towards Asia, Wrangel wrote: 'With a painful feeling of the impos-

sibility of overcoming the obstacles which nature opposed to us, our last hope vanished of discovering the land which we yet believed to exist. . . . We had done what duty and honour demanded; further attempts would have been absolutely hopeless, and I decided to return.' (P. 348 of the 1840 edition of the work described below.) Wrangel laid down upon his chart 'from Native report' 'the land which we yet believe to exist' in a position some forty or fifty miles west of where the island now named after him was later discovered.

On turning back from his third and last sledge exploratory journey, Wrangel said: 'Our return to Nishne Kolymsk closed the series of attempts made by us to discover a northern land; which, though not seen by us, may possibly exist.'

The statement just quoted is found on page 380 of the first English edition (published 1840) and unaltered on page 384 of the second edition (published 1844) of Wrangel's own *Narrative of an Expedition to the Polar Sea in the Years 1820, 1821, 1822, and 1823*. This is a translation from an earlier German edition which, in turn, was based on Wrangel's own Russian narrative written in 1825. Since the Soviet Government almost a century later quoted Wrangel in an entirely different sense, it is well to insist here that the above quotation is the more significant because it was not published by the author until fifteen years after he wrote it, and seventeen years after the expedition was over. That, surely, was ample time for him to correct his manuscript if there had been any correction to make.

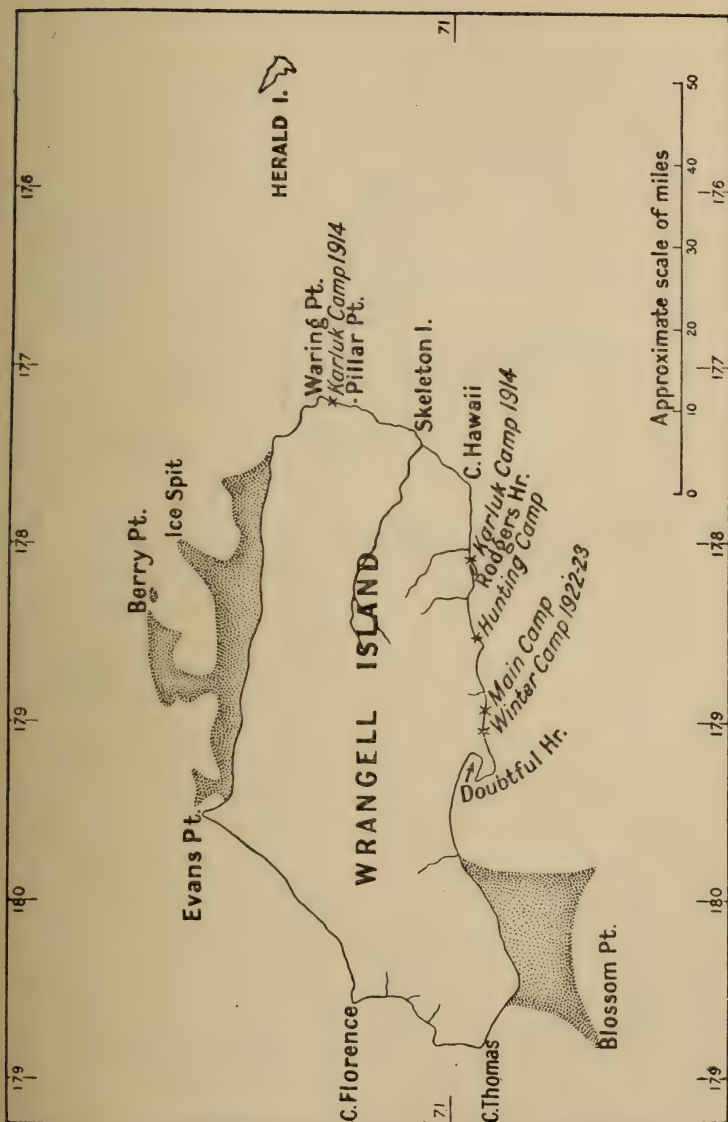
The discovery of what we now call Wrangel Island was in a sense an accident. Sir John Franklin had been lost in the Arctic for several years, and more than a dozen expeditions were sent out in the great 'Franklin Search,' which resulted in the discovery of so many new arctic lands. On one of these expeditions Captain Henry Kellett, in command of the H.M.S. *Herald*, found himself to the north of Bering Straits the summer of 1849. He sighted a small island, which eventually was named after his ship, the *Herald*. A landing

was made on August 6th and possession taken in the name of Queen Victoria. From the top of Herald Island, and also from the ship, there were visible to the west and north what Kellett took to be several small islands with an extensive land beyond. The most easterly island was named by him Plover Island. The larger land was afterwards placed on the Admiralty Charts as 'Kellett's Land' or 'Mountains Seen by Herald.' The theoretical continent still obsessed the minds of geographers, and Kellett's Land was considered to be not only the corner of the 'Great Continent,' but also the inhabited land about which the natives had told the Russians and the one for which Wrangel had searched in vain.

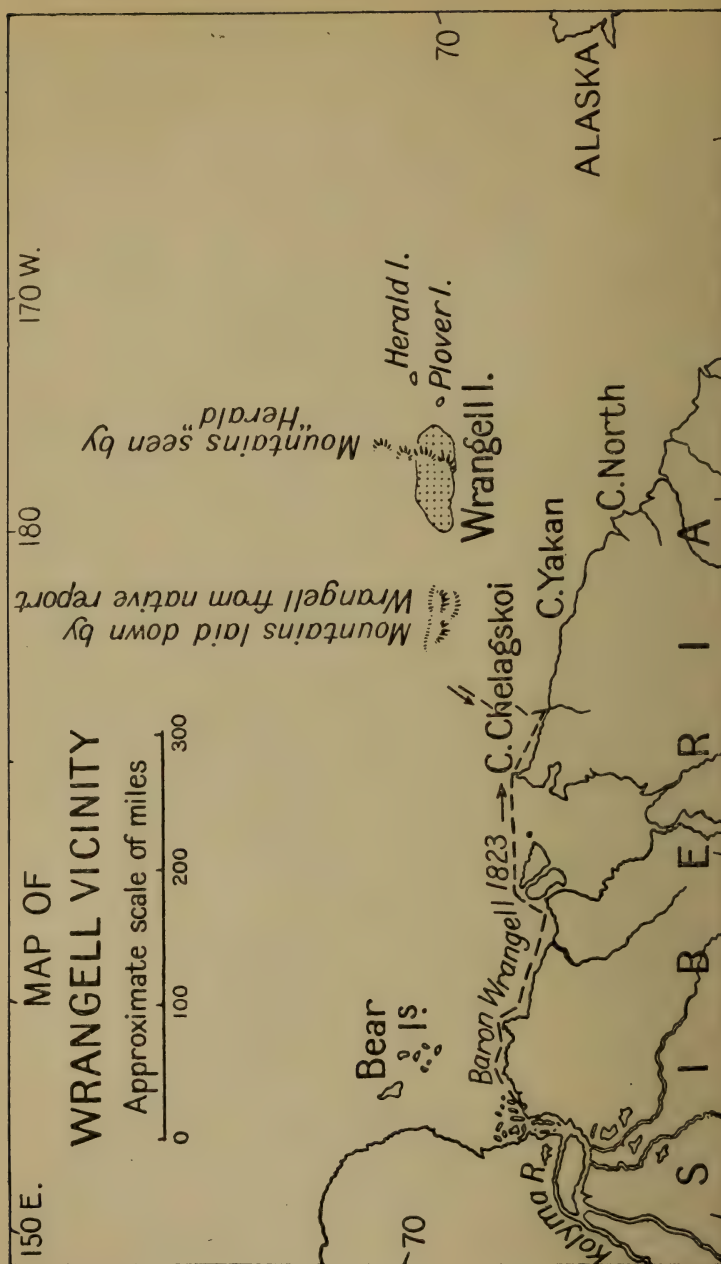
In 1855 Commander John Rodgers of the U.S.S. *Vincennes*, landed on Herald Island, but failed to sight Kellett's Land, doubtless because of the fogs so common in that region.

In 1867 the United States had just purchased Alaska from Russia. Through that transaction a former Russian Governor of the territory had become well known in the United States. He was the same Wrangel (now both Baron and Admiral). That year several American whalers were cruising to the north of Bering Straits. One of them, Captain Thomas Long, came in sight of an island that was not down on the chart which he happened to have with him. Thinking it a discovery, and being familiar not only with Wrangel's governorship of Alaska, but also with his earlier career as an explorer, Captain Long suggested to a journalist when he returned to the Hawaiian Islands that the land (which he supposed himself to have discovered) should be named after Wrangel. It was thus the present name came into popular use, although it was not generally adopted by mapmakers at that time.

During the season 1867 Kellett's Land was visited by several American whalers, including Captains Thomas and Williams, who established the fact that 'Plover Island' was merely a headland on Kellett's Land. Thirteen years afterwards, a German, Captain Dallman, of Hamburg, claimed to have anticipated Long's visit to Kellett's Land by a year,



MAP OF WRANGELL ISLAND. THE SHADED PARTS ARE SAND SPITS ONLY A LITTLE ABOVE SEA LEVEL.



THE BRITISH ADMIRALTY CHART AS IT WAS IMMEDIATELY AFTER CAPTAIN KELLETT'S DISCOVERIES WERE RECORDED ON IT, EXCEPT THAT THE DOTTED OUTLINE OF WRANGELL ISLAND, IN ITS PROPER POSITION, HAS BEEN PRINTED OVER THE 'MOUNTAINS SEEN BY *Herald*' AS ORIGINALLY MAPPED. THE 'MOUNTAINS LAID DOWN BY WRANGELL' ARE TAKEN FROM BARON WRANGELL'S OWN MAP, AND SO IS HIS SLEDGE ROUTE OF 1823.

but after that lapse of time he was unable to produce his log or any member of his crew to support his claim.¹

The erroneous reports on the extent of the eastern coast of Kellett's Land gave fresh support to the false conception of its size. In 1869 one of the visitors, Captain Bliven, gave the opinion that it extended several hundred miles to the north, strengthening the apparent probability that it was part of 'the Arctic Continent.'

The hypothetical continent was still in the minds of scientists when Lieutenant De Long was fitted out by the New York *Herald* in 1879. He steered the *Jeannette* boldly northward from the Pacific into the ice beyond Bering Straits, thinking that he could not drift far, for the 'continent' would bar the way. But, fast in the pack, he did drift far—right across the theoretical continent and beyond what now proved to be Kellett's *Island* rather than Kellett's *Land*.

By 1881 it was feared that De Long's expedition had suffered the fate of Franklin's, and search parties were outfitted. The expeditions of the American Government, in the *Corwin* and *Rodgers*, sailed from the Pacific through Bering Straits. Both landed on Kellett's Land. The *Corwin*, under Captain Calvin L. Hooper, remained only six hours (August 12th, 1881), but it was a landing about which much has been heard, for she carried the famous author and naturalist, John Muir, and other scientists, among whom the most distinguished is Dr. E. W. Nelson, now Chief of the United States Biological Survey. The *Rodgers*, under Lieutenant R. M. Berry, came a few days later and remained for three weeks, making the map which was the only one available for the next thirty-three years. The American Navy assigned to this map the name of Wrangel Island, cancelling the designation of Kellett's Land, which the island had borne for thirty-two years, perhaps to emphasize that British discovery rights were considered to have lapsed through prolonged neglect

¹ This paragraph and some other things in this chapter are paraphrased from a paper published by the Royal Geographical Society and reprinted in full, *post*, as Appendix VI.

and that American rights were being created in their stead through exploration.

Following 1849 Wrangel Island (Kellett's Land) had been British by a discovery right that gradually lost its value through neglect, until the Americans (or any other nation) were free to occupy it; following 1881 the island was similarly United States territory. But it seems elementary logic that if thirty-two years of British neglect cancels British rights, an equally long period of neglect by any other nation would cancel the rights of that nation. We do not know of any record that anyone went ashore on Wrangel Island for thirty-three years following 1881, although it seems likely that of all the many American whalers who cruised in sight of the island between that time and the end of the whaling about 1906, some must have made a landing. Still, Wrangel Island was considered to have become once more a 'No Man's Land' open to colonization by any country that cared to go to that much trouble for the sake of acquiring ownership.

The Russian aspect of the story of Wrangel Island has been well summarized in an article published in *The Geographical Journal* of the Royal Geographical Society of London for December, 1923. The article is unsigned and therefore probably by the Editors of that journal. We quote entire the portion of this paper that relates to Russia.

'There seems to be no record of any Russian ship having reached this island until 1911. In the previous year the ice-breakers *Taimuir* and *Vaigach* had been fitted out at Vladivostok for the hydrographic survey of the Arctic Ocean and islands lying off the Siberian coast. No narrative of the first years of this work is accessible, but a summary of the geographical and hydrographical results was compiled in 1912 by Lieut. B. V. Davidov and printed for the Russian Admiralty. This expedition must have erected the tall beacon thirty-five feet high which stands north of the entrance to the lagoon in the sand spit between Blossom Point and Cape Thomas (*Arctic Pilot*, 1920, p. 477). In the summer of 1914 these same ice-breakers tried to reach Wrangel Island again, to rescue the crew of the *Karluk* (see below), but were

unable to get within thirty miles of the island, and so far as can be ascertained, no Russians were ever on Wrangel Island before or after the single visit of 1911.¹

'Nevertheless the island seems to be claimed by Russia. At the end of 1916 we were informed by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs that he had received from the Russian Ambassador in London an official notification to the effect that "the territories and islands situated in the Arctic Ocean and discovered by Captain Vilkitski in 1913-14 have been incorporated in the Russian Empire." Attached to Count Benckendorf's note was a memorandum giving a summary of Vilkitski's new discoveries off Cape Chelyuskin, claiming them for the Russia Empire; and the note continued thus:

Le Gouvernement IMPERIAL profite de cette occasion pour faire ressortir qu'il considère aussi comme faisant partie intégrante de l'Empire des îles Henriette, Jeannette, Bennett, Herald et Oujedinenia, qui forment avec les îles Nouvelle Sibérie, Wrangel et autres situées près la côte asiatique de l'Empire, une extension vers le nord de la plate forme continentale de la Sibérie.

Le Gouvernement IMPERIAL n'a pas jugé nécessaire de joindre a la présente notification les îles Novaia Zemlia, Kolgouev, Waigatch et autres de moindres dimensions situées près la côte européenne de l'Empire, étant donné que leur appartenance aux territoires de l'Empire se trouve depuis des siècles universellement reconnue.²

¹ Here see Appendix IX, *post*, p. 393.

² The Imperial Government takes this occasion to set forth that it considers as making an integral part of the Empire the islands Henriette, Jeannette, Bennett, Herald and Oujedinenia, which, with the New Siberian Islands, Wrangel and others situated near the Asiatic coast of the Empire, form an extension toward the north of the continental shelf of Siberia.

The Imperial Government has not judged it necessary to add to the present notification the islands Novaia Zemlia, Kolgouev, Waigatch and others of smaller dimensions situated near the European coast of the Empire, it being granted that their appurtenance to the territories of the Empire has been universally recognized for centuries.

'The curiously oblique reference to Wrangel Island seems designed to imply previous acceptance of what, so far as we can discover, had never before been claimed.

'The last stage in the history of the island is connected with the Stefansson Arctic Expedition of 1913-18.'¹

In 1912 I had just returned from a four-year arctic expedition that had been successful enough so that I found myself in a position to organize another. I formulated ambitious plans which were laid before the American Museum of Natural History in New York and the National Geographic Society in Washington. These organizations, together with the Harvard Travellers' Club of Boston, gave me fifty thousand dollars; and two wealthy men of Philadelphia, largely through the advocacy of my friend, Henry C. Bryant, president of the Philadelphia Geographical Society, were going to give me, one of them a ship which I had already selected, and the other money enough to take her through dry dock into a first-rate condition. But I was Canadian by birth, and my two previous expeditions had been supported by the University of Toronto and the Geological Survey of Canada. I was anxious that my native country should again co-operate, and laid my plans accordingly before Sir Robert Borden, then Prime Minister of Canada. Sir Robert said at once that Canada ought to take the whole expense and responsibility of the expedition since our purpose was to explore the Arctic Ocean, in which Canada had a logical interest. Upon my suggestion he wrote letters to the American scientific organizations concerned asking them to surrender the expedition. This they did upon the condition (laid down by the National Geographic Society) that our sailing date must not be delayed beyond 1913 and that the scientific programme of the expedition should remain substantially as already outlined by me.

When we sailed north in the spring of 1913 one paragraph of our orders from the Canadian Government instructed us

¹ For full text, see Appendix VI, at back of this book.

to plant the British flag on any new or partly unknown lands which the expedition should touch.¹ This brought us into direct relation with Wrangel Island, a land originally discovered by a British naval expedition.

However, we did not have the intent to sail for Wrangel Island. Indeed, our plan was to go in a different direction, but Fate took a hand. The ice hemmed in one of our ships, the *Karluk*, late in the summer of 1913, and carried her a prisoner west along the north coast of Alaska and then in the direction of Wrangel Island, near which she sank in January, 1914, the men landing early in March. Our expedition at this stage had three ships. I was with the other two at Collinson Point, in north-eastern Alaska, ignorant for more than a year of the fate of the *Karluk*, which was under the charge of her sailing master, Captain Robert A. Bartlett, a native of Newfoundland and in Canadian employ although then recently become a naturalized citizen of the United States. After making a landing on Wrangel, Captain Bartlett instructed his men to remain there while he, with one companion, crossed the hundred-mile ice bridge to the European and native settlements of Siberia and then proceeded seven hundred miles across country to Emma Harbour to send out a wireless call for help.

Many ships responded. The Russian Government instructed their ice-breakers *Taimyr* and *Vaigatch* to proceed to Wrangel Island.

At the time I wrote an account of this in my book, *The Friendly Arctic*, my information was partly incorrect, since I depended on common report and on inaccurate newspaper dispatches. These same causes misled in the same way the author of the Royal Geographical Society article just quoted. However, these inaccuracies in the book and the article change nothing of fundamental importance, for they refer only to minor details in the movements of the Russian ships.

I have recently met Lieutenant Nicholas A. Transehe,

¹ 'Any new or partly unknown lands which the expedition would touch would be observed, positions fixed, and the British flag would be planted on these lands.' Order-in-Council, Approved February 22nd, 1913.

formerly of the Russian Imperial Navy, who was aboard the *Vaigach* at the time and who has kindly given me slightly in advance of publication the following brief statement of the movements and efforts of the Russian ships from the time they received the request from the Canadian Government that they assist if possible the party on Wrangel Island. Before this book appears, Lieutenant Transehe's article will have appeared in the *Geographical Review* (New York) for July, 1925, Vol. XV, No. 3.

'On July 7th the expedition started out from Vladivostok *en route* to the Arctic. On the way news of the commencement of the World War was received from America through the radio station in Alaska. In order to get information thereon, the *Taimir* directed its course to Nome. Later through the radio station in the village of Novo Mariinsk on the Anadir River the *Taimir* got in communication with Petrograd and received instructions to proceed with the work in the Arctic Ocean and to try to reach Archangel. The *Vaigach* busied herself in the meantime with hydrological and hydrographical observations in the Bay of St. Lawrence and around the Diomed Islands in Bering Strait. Whilst they were thus engaged there came a request from the Canadian Government to render assistance to those members of Stefansson's expedition who, after the wreck of the *Karluk*, were wintering under unfavourable conditions on Wrangel Island. The *Vaigach* proceeded thither. No efforts were spared to approach the island, which it was known would be accessible only within three weeks at most. The first attempts proving unsuccessful, the *Vaigach* tried the approach via Herald Island and the north-east, but here met the same insurmountable obstacle — thick, piled-up ice. A slight wind from the north starting up, the vessel then tried to reach the south-east coast of the island but was pressed back. A mass of ice caught in the propeller. The *Taimir*, being informed by radio of the plight of the *Vaigach*, came up, but on account of the ice could not approach nearer than ten miles. Eventually the *Vaigach* was freed, but the expedition had to give up

Re. Cutter Corwin...
August 12 1

8a

Landed here this date, having
previously landed at Herald Island.
A "Paiute" with information enclosed
may be found on the N.E. summit
of the Island.

The finder is requested to send
the contents of this bottle to the
New York Herald.

J. C. Rosse



U. S. REVENUE CUTLER "CORWIN." DEPARTURE FOR ALASKA.

PICTURE COPIED FROM FRONTISPIECE OF 'REPORT OF THE CRUISE OF THE REVENUE STEAMER *Corwin*'—1885. USED BY COURTESY OF THE U. S. NAVY DEPARTMENT.

the idea of trying to reach Wrangel Island, the work of rescue, it is subsequently learned, being accomplished by the American trading schooner *King and Winge* commanded by her owner, Captain Olaf Swenson.'

The United States revenue cutter *Bear* made an attempt, but also failed. Several private ships tried. The successful one was the *King and Winge*, under her owner, Olaf Swenson, who had been induced to make the attempt by Burt M. McConnell, a former member of our expedition. Her captain, A. P. Jochimsen, was used to the sort of ice he had to contend with and wormed his way up to the island. Southward bound a day later the *King and Winge* met the *Bear* thirty or forty miles from Wrangel and transferred to her (and to Captain Bartlett, who was on board the *Bear*) the men she had picked up. The *Corwin* (the same that had visited Wrangel Island in 1881, but now a private ship sent out by a friend of mine, Mr. Jafet Lindeberg), arrived at the island a day later to find the fresh traces of the luckier *King and Winge*.¹

Meantime the crew of the *Karluk* had spent the summer on Wrangel Island, formally reaffirming possession of it for the British Empire according to our instructions from the Canadian Government, and keeping the flag flying for more

¹ I believe Mr. McConnell deserves the credit we have given him in this paragraph for his part in influencing Mr. Swenson. But the proofs of this book has been read by a man who was in Nome at the time and who, therefore, knows the local situation. His belief is that the real influence which started so many ships trying to reach Wrangel Island was the announcement by Mr. Lindeberg that he would purchase the *Corwin* and outfit her with a year's supplies for the single purpose of rescuing the marooned men during the summer or trying to reach them during the following winter. This informant considered that a damper had been thrown over the rescue efforts by the failure of the revenue cutter *Bear* to reach the island on her first attempt, and that the situation might have been given up as hopeless by every one but for Mr. Lindeberg's announcement. When he made it, other commanders of ships were encouraged to try, and some of them were able to put to sea while the outfitting of the *Corwin* was going on. Hence the failure of the *Corwin* to be the first to reach Wrangel Island, although, in another sense, she deserved more credit than any.

than six months. That in itself is a long story of adventure and, unfortunately, also of tragedy. We can tell it best from two manuscripts. The one we shall mainly use is written by Jack Hadley, then a member of the company of the *Karluk*, but later captain of the schooner *Polar Bear*, of our expedition. For an introduction to Hadley's story, we shall take a magazine article written by one of his comrades of the shipwrecked crew, Frederick W. Maurer, who later played such an important part in the story of Wrangel Island.

CHAPTER 3

THE FATAL DRIFT OF THE 'KARLUK'

FOR me, at least, Captain Jack Hadley is the first big figure in the story of Wrangel Island. Baron Wrangel, who first searched for it as a continent (1821-4), did not find it or any other land. Kellett, who found it (1849), did not land on it, nor did he know it was an island. De Long, whose voyage proved it to be an island (1879-81), saw it only from a distance. The American whalers who first landed on it (1867) stayed only a few hours. Hooper, Muir, and Nelson (1881) were ashore for only part of a day. Berry and his men came a few days later and remained three weeks. From them we have an approximate map of the island, but the information about it in other respects is neither comprehensive nor detailed. Bartlett in 1914 remained only a few days, and the applicable part of his book, *The Last Voyage of the 'Karluk,'* is only a few pages, with little but personal information of how the landing was made and why he had to leave his men there while he proceeded to the mainland of Siberia. John Munro was in command of the party on the island after Bartlett left, but he has given us no published account of what happened during the following seven months. Both McKinlay and Maurer published newspaper articles, and it is possible that other members of the party may have printed fugitive pieces that have not come to my attention. The only story that approaches completeness in narrative, in discussion of motives and methods, and in information about the climate and country, is a handwritten manuscript by Jack Hadley now in the archives of the Department of the Naval Service at Ottawa.

Jack Hadley was in himself no less pleasantly unusual than his career was romantic. Of English parentage on both sides, he was born in Canterbury, and he told of his various escapades as a choir boy in the Cathedral with greater relish than any of the other stories of his adventurous life. He had a love for music and a voice beyond the ordinary. Apart

from the Cathedral choir he had no training, but he had listened to operas in big cities and to native songs in every corner of the earth, and whatever he heard he could reproduce, modified by his peculiar temperament and talents. He could play a variety of wind and string instruments and carried an assortment of them with him wherever he went.

And he went nearly everywhere. Besides sailing every sea he had been a tramp in Australia and, I think, in Africa. He had run away from ships in tropical islands both of the East and West Indies. He had been an officer in the navy of Chile and had fought as a lieutenant on a Chinese ship in the Chinese-Japanese War. When the United States sent its first revenue cutter to Herschel Island, in the Arctic, just west of the Mackenzie River, in 1889 to determine whether that central rendezvous of the new whalers' paradise was American or Canadian territory, Hadley was a minor officer on the ship. The island turned out to be well east of what had previously been agreed upon as the international boundary. The Government of the United States, therefore, lacked the power to regulate the rather turbulent whaler-Eskimo metropolis, and Hadley sailed west beyond Point Barrow.

The Arctic pleased Hadley beyond every country. During the next twenty-five years he made occasional forays to San Francisco or England, but wintered in the Arctic more than twenty times, always whaling or trapping, except for a brief connection with the arctic coal mines near Cape Lisburne. No man whose name is found in reference books under the heading of the 'Polar Explorer' ever spent half that much time beyond either of the polar circles. Franklin died during his second winter, and Scott in his third. Shackleton spent three polar winters, Bartlett four, Nansen four. Amundsen has eight winters to his credit, and so has Sverdrup. Peary spent nine winters in the Arctic. I have ten polar winters behind me now, but my record was only half that when Hadley joined our expedition in 1914.

Hadley's experience, besides being more extensive than that of any so-called explorer, was also in a way more varied,

for he had been there as a trader, whaler, naval officer, coal miner and (the last four years) as an explorer. He had travelled on foot and by sledge and in every variety of sea conveyance – skin-boat, wooden whaleboat, sail ship and steamer. He had hunted and trapped on the arctic lands; he had travelled on the landfast sea ice and to some extent on the moving pack. On one occasion he and his party had been given up for dead when a terrific gale broke the ice on which they were whaling west of Point Barrow and carried them they knew not where, for they had no instruments of precision. When they sighted land after several weeks of struggle, it was four hundred miles from Point Barrow and about equally far from where they had supposed themselves to be.

As related in *My Life With the Eskimo*, I first met Hadley at Cape Smythe, near Point Barrow, in 1908, and liked and admired him from the first. When the three ships of my expedition sailed past Cape Smythe in 1913, he was there and wanted to join, both because we had always been good friends and because he was beginning to consider the north tip of Alaska a little tame. I wanted to give him one of the chief positions of responsibility in the expedition, but, since it had been organized before I knew he would join it, I found no berth for him at once, and without official rating, he was sharing my cabin on board the *Karluk* as my friend and travelling companion when an accident separated five others and myself from the *Karluk*, which drifted off, held fast in the shifting ice, while we watched from shore helpless. The ship was now under my official next in command, Captain Robert A. Bartlett, and Hadley remained without formal status as the sole occupant of my cabin during the *Karluk's* thousand miles of ice-fettered drifting between September, 1913, and the end of that year. He did not, therefore, belong to the official machinery of the expedition when the *Karluk* broke and sank.

I did not hear of that wreck until a year and a half later, and I did not learn the full story until still another year had passed and Hadley had joined us again after the adventures

of shipwreck, the march over shifting floes to Wrangel Island, the seven months on the Island, and the voyage to Victoria, B. C., after the party had been picked up in Wrangel Island by Swenson, Jochimsen and McConnell of the *King and Winge*.

Hadley had a pungent and inimitable way of speaking, only a faint flavour of which remains in what he wrote. I had every form of interest in the story as he told it, sometimes in casual fragments and sometimes in long chapters, when we were together between 1915 and 1918. I knew the ship that sank with many of my hopes and with many a book and memento treasured from childhood. I knew the dogs that died pathetically during the first few days, and the men who died soon thereafter partly because those dogs had not survived to help them. I knew the other dogs that helped the seventeen people to reach Wrangel Island and that took the Captain and his one companion from there to Siberia. I knew the men who died later on Wrangel Island and the men who lived through. Some that died and some that lived were dear friends, and the responsibility for it all was mine to a greater or less degree.

During the expedition there had always been at least three theories aboard the *Karluk* as to almost anything that we did or failed to do. James Murray and Forbes Mackay, veterans of the Antarctic, had views from Shackleton's expeditions which prevailed with them and confused those whom they tried to convert. Bartlett had his opinions, gained under the leadership of Peary and from association with the Greenland Eskimos, who differ in many of their ideas and methods from those of Alaska. Hadley and I had ideas developed in the western Arctic, partly from association with the local Eskimos. The scientific staff and crew were divided and perplexed by these three sets of views.

As Hadley told me the story during long winter evenings, we talked much of what should have been done and might have been done, with condemnation, approval or regret. When he wrote the story at my request he naturally filled it with long discussions of what he himself and others had

argued as to whether this or that were safe or wise. It has long been the custom to publish certain historical documents only after the men concerned with them are dead. Some time Hadley's manuscript will doubtless be published as he wrote it. It will then be far more enlightening than the fragments of it which we can now publish. Even so, I feel that Hadley should be allowed to tell at least part of the story in his own words, editorial discretion imposing silences and softening phrases here and there.

As we have said, Captain Hadley's handwritten document as preserved in the Government archives at Ottawa is the fullest and most explicit story of the vicissitudes of the *Karluks* on her long drift. If a critical history ever comes to be written, the Hadley story can be checked and supplemented by the copy of Captain Bartlett's log, which is also in the same archives and has been published in the Report of the Department of the Naval Service for the Fiscal Year ended March 31st, 1915. While this log is too fragmentary to form a connected story, it is of great value when used together with Hadley's narrative or else together with Captain Bartlett's own popular account as published in *The Last Voyage of the 'Karluk.'* My own version of how the *Karluk* was first beset by the ice and how my small hunting party and I were separated from it by accident has also been published in *The Friendly Arctic*, Chapters V and VI, and some account of her drift in the appendix to that book.

We can, therefore, choose between many sources. Most logical perhaps would be to use Hadley as the basis of it all, but we have decided to tell the first part of the story in the words of Frederick Maurer. If we used any of the other versions we should have to condense for the purpose of this book; but Maurer has been so brief that we can afford to print his statement without change, except minor editing as where names are misspelt because he did not have the ship's papers when he wrote. We have also omitted a few things which were pertinent then but which would now only confuse the reader, and we have corrected one or two errors into which Maurer fell in common with nearly every one

else, as for instance where he refers with apparent approval to the belief common at that time that I was dead because I had been absent on the ice to the north of Alaska for several months when I had 'planned to be gone for only ten days.' The fact was, of course, that I had planned to be gone for a year, but that an incorrect report of my programme had been circulated in such a way that the *Karluk* party, who had not been in recent personal contact with me, were led to believe, in common with the rest of the public, that my two sledging companions and I had starved to death.

There are reasons of sentiment also for taking part of our story from Maurer. It was he who eventually hauled up the British flag on Wrangel Island (July 1st, 1914). By his residence of seven months on Wrangel, he was fired with a desire to be an instrument in redeeming it from the unknown and bringing it within the circle of lands that are used and valued. Mountain climbers do not delight in their feats because they are easy, but their pleasures are not therefore less real than the lethargic joys of a winter resort. So it was with Maurer. Wrangel Island had always been to him a difficult place. There were hard times in 1914, but well before 1921 he had begun to long for an opportunity to try himself against these same difficulties again, just as the mountaineer wants to return to the fastnesses where he has had perhaps his greatest disappointments. Maurer had seen three of his companions die, and he had dug their graves and raised the crosses that stand on Wrangel Island. He wanted to carry forward the work so that these men should not have died in vain, and he was fearless and even enthusiastic about it, for he felt he had learned by experience how dangers and difficulties that had formerly been serious could now be overcome. He did not persuade Knight or me into the new adventure any more than we persuaded him. But he did give us the facts of climate and conditions upon which we based our plans.

I am sorry, therefore, that we have to prefer even Hadley's narrative to Maurer's for the main part of the Wrangel story. That is because Hadley has left us a long document.

THE FATAL DRIFT OF THE 'KARLUK'

Maurer has left only four short articles that were published by the New York *World* on June 6th, 13th, 20th, and 27th, 1915. Brevity dictated by the space which the newspaper allowed makes the story unsuited for our uses in so far as the events after the shipwreck are concerned. But that very brevity makes it particularly suitable for a summary of the drift which preceded the wreck. We set it down here as published in *The World Magazine* for Sunday, June 6th, 1915:

Maurer's Narrative

The Canadian Arctic Expedition, under command of Vilhjalmur Stefansson, in the barkentine *Karluk*, sailed from Esquimalt, British Columbia, June 17th, 1913. The purpose of the expedition was to make scientific investigations along the northern coast of Canada, and to look for new lands supposed to lie somewhere in the great uncharted sea to the north and north-west of Alaska.

On August 6th the expedition passed Point Barrow, the northernmost tip of Alaska, and it was here that the *Karluk* encountered the first difficulties of her trip.

Our staunch little ship bravely bucked her way through the pack till August 15th, when we found ourselves imprisoned and held helplessly in the relentless grip of the vast floe from which she never was liberated. We did not, however, realize the gravity of our situation at the time, still hoping that a lead would open and permit us to pass on our way and escape, as we thought, our temporary imprisonment.

At this time we were at Camden Bay, about seventy-five miles west of the international boundary line between Canada and Alaska, and twenty miles off shore. The weather was clear and cold, and the snow-clad mountains of Alaska were in plain sight. The proximity of the land gave us a sense of security, as the ice had now closed in to the shore and we could have left the ship at any time, had we so desired, and marched to land in safety.

Later our icefield started moving west, but it stopped in

Harrison Bay. Our commander, Dr. Stefansson, believed that the early northern winter had closed in upon us. The *Karluk* was as well equipped and supplied with necessities as any ship that ever sailed beyond the Arctic Circle.

We lay here a little over a month, when Dr. Stefansson organized a hunting trip to the mountains of Alaska for caribou in order to secure a supply of fresh meat. He took with him three white men, two natives and dogs and sleds. He was equipped for a two weeks' hunt.

On September 20th Stefansson bade us 'good-bye' and started with men and dog teams for land. We watched him over the ice until he was lost to view. He has never been seen since by any of the crew that remained with the *Karluk*. The white men who went with him were McConnell, Wilkins, Jenness, of whom McConnell only has returned to civilization, the other two remaining in the North and continuing their work for the Canadian Government (this was written in May, 1915).

Two days after Stefansson left us, a heavy fog settled over the entire region. It was so dense that we were able to see only a few rods in any direction. Almost simultaneous with the fog, a blizzard blowing from the south-east sprang up. The fog enveloped us for three days, and being unable to take any bearings, we were wholly unconscious of any movement of our position. When the mists cleared away the shores of the continent were no longer in sight, and upon taking astronomical observations, we found that we had drifted quite a distance from our former position.

When the *Karluk* started on her drift there were twenty white men, two Eskimo men, one Eskimo woman and two children, little girls, on board. We were well supplied with provisions, coal, arms, ammunition, dogs, sleds, snowshoes and skis, everything necessary for arctic travel. At first there did not seem to be much concern among the members of the expedition, except among the six scientists. They talked among themselves a great deal as to the probable outcome of our situation. The other members indulged in many conjectures, but passed the matter over rather lightly, always



STEFANSSON'S PARTY ABOUT TO LEAVE THE *Karluk*, SEPTEMBER, 1913.



HADLEY BRINGING HOME A SEAL, EARLY SPRING OF 1914.



REAR-ADMIRAL ROBERT MALLORY BERRY, U.S.N.—
RETIRED.



CALVIN LEIGHTON HOOPER, CAPTAIN U.S. COAST
GUARD SERVICE. BORN IN BOSTON, MASS.,
JULY 7, 1842. DIED IN OAKLAND, CAL.,
APRIL 29, 1900. USED BY COURTESY OF MRS.
CALVIN L. HOOPER.



JOHN MUNRO, CHIEF ENGINEER, WHO WAS IN
COMMAND OF THE *Kar-luk* PARTY ON WRANGLER
FROM MARCH TO SEPTEMBER, 1915.

expecting some turn of good fortune that would liberate us from the grip of the ice. By taking observations daily, we knew that we were skirting the shores of Alaska, and at no time very far from them, although they were never in sight. We drifted past Point Barrow in the night, passing so near that we almost touched land. Our passing was later reported to Dr. Stefansson by a native who claimed to have seen us, and I believe he did, for he stated that there was no smoke issuing from our funnels. This was true, for we had blown down our boilers some time before.

When Stefansson returned from his hunting trip he found the *Karluk* missing. He then made his way overland to Point Barrow, three hundred miles distant, where he wrote a telegram reporting the loss of the *Karluk*, and sent it by a native to Nome, four hundred miles away, which was the nearest telegraph station. We learned later that he then returned to Herschel Island, where the *Belvedere*, which carried freight and additional supplies for him, was lying, and fitted out a dog sled expedition to make a dash for the unknown land which he believed lay somewhere in the uncharted area to the north of Alaska. He started with dogs and sleds taking with him two Norwegians, Storkerson and Andreasen, both experienced arctic travellers, on March 22nd, 1914. Up to the present time nothing further has been heard of him (May, 1915).

We must have passed Point Barrow some time before Stefansson arrived there, as we drifted rapidly between Camden Bay and that point, making as much as three knots an hour, or about forty miles a day, and we had probably seven or eight days the start of him. It seems that when he lost his ship he was seized with a desperate determination not to be balked in his attempt to reach an unknown land which he believed to exist. Returning to the *Belvedere*, he made the dash which in its very nature was little short of suicidal. The icepack to the north of Alaska is known to be the most treacherous in the arctic seas.

When we began drifting the sun was above the horizon about ten hours each day. By the time we passed Point

Barrow we had only five hours of sunlight, and on November 15th the sun disappeared below the horizon altogether and we entered upon the long arctic night.

In the meantime Captain Bartlett set about taking measures for our safety. He first had us bank up the sides of the ship with ice for the purpose of forming a kind of cushion against the lateral pressure of the floe that held us. Then we blew down the boilers and began repairing the engines. This we did by taking them apart piece by piece and replacing each as soon as it had been gone over and repairs made if needed. Captain Bartlett had us remove all the sacked coal that we had on deck and place it on the ice beside the ship; also all the biscuits, kerosene, alcohol, sleds and skis. We then put the ship and the portion of the cargo that remained on her in good and snug shape and made her our living quarters. Keeping us at work as much of the time as he could was the best thing Captain Bartlett could have done for us. As long as we were working it seemed that we were living for a purpose and were still a part of the busy world.

But we were drifting, drifting, we knew not to what haven, in the silent icy fastnesses of the North. On every hand there was an unbroken stretch of ice, level save where it had been forced into hummocky ridges by the lateral pressure of its own irresistible mass. So long as the sun was with us to measure the night and day it was not so bad; but when the orb disappeared a sort of sickening sensation of loneliness came over us. We did not despair, although we knew that the ice and the tides and currents were bearing us farther into the gloom.

After leaving the coast of Alaska our general drift was to the north-west. Of course, we did not travel in a direct line, but zigzagged about until we reached the latitude of 75 degrees North, then we took a south-westerly course to the point that is now designated as Shipwreck Camp on the maps and charts of arctic exploration.

There is a peculiar weirdness in those shifty stretches of the ice-pack. Sometimes no sound is heard for hours or days, and then comes the boom or roar of ice breaking and grind-

ing by its own great weight. The law of compensation is operative in the Arctic as well as elsewhere, for though we were deprived of the glories of the day, we often beheld the wonderful beauties of the far northern night. Most of the time the sky was clear and the stars shone brilliantly; the Pole Star was almost directly overhead, and the great constellations that rise and set where most people live made a nightly circuit of our heavens without setting. The displays of the aurora borealis were remarkable for their beauty and variety. We often stood upon our drifting world of ice and admired their shifting colours, forgetful of the dangers that were constantly threatening to destroy us without warning.

After we had been drifting several weeks, life consisted mainly in devising means to pass the time. The ship's dogs lived on the ice, preferring the open to staying on board. We had built shelters for them, but they rarely went into them. All about the ship were ring-like depressions in the snow worn by the dogs lying there and melted by the warmth of their bodies. Each dog had his own nest. If one attempted to intrude upon the rights of another, bickerings were sure to follow; but this did not occur often, as these husky animals, though shrewd and cunning, generally play fair toward each other. They are kind and friendly to their masters and faithful in their devotion to men.

The men spent most of their time aboard ship. There was about two hours' work a day for each, and the remainder of the time was spent in sleeping, reading, playing cards, chess and draughts, and listening to music from our gramophone. We had an abundance of fine records that were an ever-living source of pleasure. We were well supplied with good reading, books and magazines. The forethought of Dr. Stefansson in supplying us with means of entertainment was one of the wisest precautions he could have taken.

The *Karluk* was supplied with the best of provisions to last her three years. We also had large quantities of foods in more condensed form for use on the trail. While on the ship no restrictions were put upon the amount of food allowed to

each man; everything was furnished in plenty. We procured fresh water from an ice floe that was several years old. The effect of the sun upon ocean ice is to draw the salt from it gradually.

We had been drifting so long without any unusual incident that our ship became a veritable home to us. We had comfort and plenty on board, and in a measure forgot our helplessness.

Day succeeded day in the same monotonous way, until one night in the early part of December we were suddenly aroused by a strong reminder of what was in store for us. About nine o'clock in the evening, as we were sitting in the cabin entertaining ourselves with music, reading and games, we were startled by a heavy booming sound that was almost deafening. We hurried to the main deck and discovered that a lead had opened in the ice off the port side of the ship. The lead opened fifty feet from the vessel, was probably a half mile in length and four feet in width, and was in the old floe on which we kept dogs and on which we had previously stored provisions removed from the ship. When I tell you that where the lead opened the ice was solid and fifteen feet in thickness, you may have some idea of the terrific strain that caused it to part.

Our first care was to bring the dogs to safety. We did not mind about the coal and provisions, as we still had plenty on board. The dogs would not cross the lead of their own accord, so we had to leap across to them, take them by their chains, then recross the lead and drag the dogs after us. These northern dogs do not take kindly to the water; they will sleep on the snow and ice for months, but they have an instinct that teaches them the water is to be avoided. We knew that if we lost our dogs we would be helpless in case the ship was crushed and sunk.

In a few days this lead partially closed, leaving us in the same situation as before. By this time we had started on our south-westerly drift and were moving in the direction of Wrangel Island. We noticed, also, that whereas it had been a silent drift before, we now frequently heard the booming

noises caused by the strain of the ice that told us leads were forming.

We were nearing the arctic midnight. Nothing further occurring to renew our fears, we settled back into the old routine of living and waiting.

We celebrated Christmas Day, 1913, on board the *Karluk*. It was the last Christmas on earth for many of our company. We held athletic sports and contests, such as running, jumping, sack races, three-legged races, etc., for which prizes were given. All of us were in splendid health and good spirits. At four o'clock P.M. we sat down to a Christmas dinner, at which we had polar bear steaks, canned lobster, canned ox tongue, creamed peas, creamed potatoes, which we had saved the whole time just to have them for Christmas Day, canned asparagus, plum-puddings, cakes, nuts and different kinds of canned fruits.

In the centre of the table was placed a small artificial Christmas tree as the main decorative feature. It was a feast royal, the richest, I have no doubt, ever spread so far north of the Arctic Circle. Captain Bartlett sent down a bottle of liquor to every five or six men, as an additional feature of good cheer. It was the only time since the expedition started that we were allowed any liquor except on the advice of the surgeon in case of sickness.

The week between Christmas and New Year's Day was uneventful. We celebrated New Year's Day by having a game of football on the ice. There were several Scotsmen with us who challenged all nations to play them. The game lasted an hour and was hotly contested. The allies won by a score of 8 to 3. We had a special dinner that day also. We might have had several more fine dinners had we known what was before us, for there were large stores of good things abandoned later when we were forced to leave the ship.

On January 10th, 1914, at five o'clock in the morning, the crisis came. Without a moment's warning, there was a crash and roar that awakened every one. Again all hurried out to see what had happened. We discovered that leads had opened in several directions fore and aft the ship and on

both sides of her. The *Karluk* was right in one of the leads. Making a hurried examination, we found the ship uninjured, but the splitting of the ice had caused her to change her position slightly. After five minutes the sounds of breaking and crushing ice ceased and all was quiet again, and remained so until seven o'clock, the evening of the same day, when the ominous and threatening roar of the grinding ice began again. This time it was closing in against the sides of the ship.

Next came a crash that sent us rushing to the hold of the vessel. We discovered that the side of the *Karluk* at the engine room had been crushed and she was filling with water. The ice still held her upright, and she remained in that position twenty hours longer.

End of Article by Frederick Maurer.

THE SINKING OF THE SHIP AND THE JOURNEY
ASHORE

WHEN the *Karluk* was about to sink, as Hadley will presently relate, there were aboard of her twenty white men, two Eskimo men, an Eskimo woman and two children, who were eventually divided into three parties. Captain Bartlett led safely ashore on Wrangel Island the following: G. Breddy, fireman; Ernest F. Chafe, cabin boy; John Hadley; William Laird McKinlay, magnetician; George Malloch, geologist; Bjarne Mamen, assistant to the geologist; Frederick W. Maurer, fireman; John Munro, chief engineer; Robert Templeman, steward; H. Williams, sailor; Robert J. Williamson, second engineer; the Eskimos Kataktovik and Kurraluk; the latter's wife Keruk, and their two little daughters Makperk and Helen. Because of a difference of opinion as to methods and plans, Captain Bartlett permitted at their own request that four men should separate themselves to go, as they intended, first to Wrangel Island and then across Siberia to Petrograd, using 'Shackleton methods of travel as developed in the Antarctic.' These were A. Forbes Mackay, surgeon; James Murray, oceanographer; Henri Beuchat, anthropologist, and S. Stanley Morris, sailor. Beyond the pathetic details which Hadley gives, nothing further was ever heard of them until Captain Louis L. Lane and Mr. D. M. Le Bourdais made ten years later the discoveries which are described in Appendix X, *post*. Four other men acting under the Captain's instructions were sent toward Herald Island—Alexander Anderson, first mate; Charles Barker, second mate; John Brady, sailor; and A. King, sailor. These have never been heard from since, and beyond Hadley's reasonable conjectures, there is nothing known.]

Hadley's Narrative

The evening of January 4th, 1914, there was a crack like a shot that brought everybody out on deck with a startled

look. We found the ice had split with a narrow crack from the ship's stem right out ahead. When we returned to the cabin there was a great discussion started among the scientific staff. Each one had his theory about it, but it seemed to be finally decided that the tides were at the bottom of the trouble. The Doctor asked me what I thought of it and I answered him that, as the wind was blowing pretty fresh from the north, I thought that might account for the pressure. Whenever there was pressure during our drift there was always a discussion about it.

The next Saturday about five A.M. all hands were awakened by a loud crashing and groaning of the ship and for a few minutes she was writhing in her ice dock as if her last hour had come. But after a while things quieted down. It happened to be blowing rather strong from the north and everybody was on the alert that evening. About seven P.M. we got a strong squeezing which seemed to lift the ship several inches. Fifteen minutes later there was a loud cracking of timbers, she heeled to starboard several degrees, and water commenced to pour into the engine room. A few minutes later the Captain gave orders to abandon the ship.

The only food that was taken out of the ship at this time was pemmican. The Captain detailed me to look out for all the bags of clothing that were in Mr. Stefansson's cabin, and the rifles, ammunition, etc. We took also a twelve-gauge shotgun, but the ammunition that was passed out of the ship with this shotgun was all sixteen-gauge loaded shells and the mistake was not discovered until too late.

After the pemmican and other stuff was on the ice, the Captain ordered me to take the Eskimos and build two large houses. The walls were made of boxes of bread and sacks of coal reinforced with snow and covered with the ship's sail that had been placed on the ice several weeks before. We lived in those houses very comfortably until Shipwreck Camp was deserted several weeks later.

During this time a blizzard was blowing from the north. As fast as anything was placed on the ice it was covered with the drifting snow. I put an extra case of .30-30 ammunition

on the ice, as the two natives had each a .30-30. Later these cases of ammunition could not be found nor yet a case of 6½ mm. (Mannlicher) ammunition.

There was plenty of time to save everything we wanted from the ship, for she was held tight in the ice all that night and till mid-afternoon, when she began to go down by the head until she was almost perpendicular. Then she suddenly straightened out on a level keel and slowly sank with the Union Jack flying. The depth of water was thirty fathoms.

For several days after this all hands were engaged getting ready for the trip ashore, fixing up boots and socks and sleeping gear, making these the best they could out of deer-skins. About the middle of January the Captain sent three sledloads of provisions and all the dogs (over twenty) with the first and second officers and two sailors with orders to go to Wrangel Island and form a base and build a house to be ready for the ship's company whenever they should arrive.¹

I think it was sixteen or seventeen days before the teams returned. During that interval the Captain had a line of depots made at distances of one, two, three and four days' travel towards Wrangel Island from Shipwreck Camp. These contained food and oil [kerosene]. He asked me what I thought of his doing this, and I told him I thought it a waste of time, for the chances were we never would find them, as the ice was on the move all the time.

I forget who went on the first trip, but on the second one were Malloch and Munro, and they had a mishap. It was before they had cached their loads. They started across a patch of young ice and got about ten feet from the strong ice when their sled broke through, and what they didn't lose they got wet, with themselves in the bargain. So they dumped their load and started back to Shipwreck Camp, but night overtook them before they reached it, as they were about thirty or forty miles away when they broke through.

¹ There was evidently at this stage a confusion of Wrangel with Herald Island. The party had instructions to go to Wrangel Island, but they actually headed for a land which they saw on the skyline to the south and which was Herald Island, as the later narrative shows.

When they camped, they had a very pleasant night of it by their own account. I forget whether they lost their primus stove or not, but if they didn't it would not burn, as everything was frozen up. They had to stand up all night and move around to keep from freezing, waiting for daylight, which in the early part of January was quite a long wait [about eighteen hours]. The next day they got to us more dead than alive. I forget who it was made the next trip – the last. I was busy making sledges, so I made no trips.

I think it was February 4th or 5th that the sleds returned to camp with the news that they had left the Mate's party on the ice with about three miles of open water between them and Herald Island. They had one sled, three sled-loads of provisions and no dogs. The feet of one of the four were badly frozen already. I thought this a bad position for the Mate's party to be in, for if the ice started to crush, which in all probability it would do, it was all off with his outfit. They might save themselves but they wouldn't save much of their gear.

[After describing how, through differences of opinion as to methods between Captain Bartlett and the surgeon, Dr. Mackay, it was decided that the dissenters should be allowed to separate from the main party, Hadley goes on:]

There was great excitement in camp that evening. The Doctor's party were planning to start out on their own account. The next day they got ready and packed their sled with fifty days' rations for four men. The Captain told them they could have anything they wanted (except dogs – these would all remain with the main party).

I think it was the third morning after this that the Captain sent two or three sleds with loads of provisions to Herald Island with the intention to join the Mate's party. About February 10th the sleds returned with the news that when they arrived at Herald Island they found the ice had done considerable crushing. They could discover no sign of the Mate's party. They seemed to have disappeared off the face of the earth. The search party camped about three miles from Herald Island, for they could not get ashore because of

water and slush ice. Next day they hunted again for signs of people living or dead but found none. During the next night the ice commenced working. The piece they were camped on was a small, solid cake. The next morning at daylight they found they were adrift on it with water all around them, going to the west at a mile or two an hour. [Some similar thing had probably happened to the Mate's party.] After drifting a few hours, their cake touched the pack and they were able to get off. One of their sleds collapsed, so they cached their load — which was never found again. On the return trip they met the Doctor's party and found them in pretty bad shape. The sailor, Morris, had blood poisoning in one of his hands and poor Beuchat had frozen both feet from the ankles down and both hands from the wrists solid. He couldn't get his boots and stockings on or his mittens, and he was in a very pitiable plight. The most cheerful one seemed to be Murray. The Doctor appeared all in. They were double-tripping their stuff and Beuchat remained at the camp to look out for their things. Chafe wanted him to return to Shipwreck Camp, but Beuchat would not. He knew we could not do anything for him there. The Doctor's party was never seen or heard of again, nor any trace of them found.¹

That evening the Captain informed me that on the 12th of the month I would leave with the two engineers, Munro and Williamson, the two firemen, Breddy and Maurer, and Malloch, Chafe and one sailor. We would have two sleds and would go to Wrangel Island. The chief engineer, John Munro, was in command of our party.

The next day we got everything ready. We had a lot of collapsible iron stoves for burning driftwood, and I wanted to take two of them along to Wrangel Island so we could use wood for fuel. They weighed only a few pounds. The Captain did not approve of this, however, for he had never been in those parts of the Arctic where driftwood is available for fuel, and gave us orders to burn kerosene instead. We started

¹ The mystery of what became of this party was finally solved ten years later by Captain Louis L. Lane and D. M. Le Bourdais — see Appendix.

with a light load and were to replenish as we went along from the above-mentioned depots which had been made at the Captain's orders at various intervals towards land. I should judge we had nine hundred pounds to each sled and five dogs. We had one Mannlicher rifle for each sled and three hundred rounds of ammunition for each rifle. We also had one .22 calibre rifle with five hundred rounds.

About nine o'clock February 12th, the chief engineer's party started from Shipwreck Camp towards shore with me in it. We tried to follow the old trail made by the sledges when they were carrying out the supplies which had been cached in the several depots at varying distances from Shipwreck Camp along a line running towards shore. We found the trail broken by ice movement and difficult or impossible to follow. In some places we would come to where the trail ended abruptly along a line of ice movement, and after long search we might find it two or three miles to one side or the other. Usually it was found to the left, for the farther away from Wrangel Island the ice was, the faster it was drifting to the west. Our progress was pretty slow, for in addition to searching for the trail we had to chop a road through pressure ridges frequently with the pickaxes. Our reason for trying to follow the old trail was to see if we could find any of the depots. When we arrived in a locality where we thought one of the depots ought to be, we stopped for several hours or perhaps overnight to make a search. I did not expect to find any of them, but we did find one which by good luck was in the middle of an old ice floe that had escaped crushing.

The second morning out I shot a small bear, but the rest of the boys would not eat it as they weren't hungry enough yet, so I gave it to the dogs. This was better for them than the pemmican ration.

The morning when we left camp the wind was freshening from the north-east. It gradually increased to a blizzard and kept up for five or six days. In the morning of the sixth day we arrived at the pressed-up ice where the edge of the land-fast floe is constantly torn and ground by the moving pack. This proved to be about forty miles north of Wrangel Island.

The ice was crushing and tumbling so that we just had to wait for it to stop. I picked out what I thought was a good cake for camping. I then went to have a better look at the ridge and found the ice in a frightful condition. I got on top of a small pinnacle which was not moving just then and found the ridge extended about three and a half miles through such ice as I had never before seen in my twenty-five years' knowledge of the Arctic Sea. Nothing could be done till the crushing stopped. I had grave fears for the Doctor's and the Mate's parties if they got caught in this — fears which later proved only too well justified.

We camped and waited for the ice to stop crushing. That evening about eight o'clock we were all in our blankets and I was listening to the ice we were on groaning and vibrating when, snap! it cracked right across the floor of our house. We tumbled out as quickly as we could, packed the gear on the sled, hitched up the dogs and got everything ready for retreat. I found we were surrounded by lanes of water, but, as we were two or three miles from the ridge, I thought we wouldn't do anything until daylight unless we had to, because it was so dark you could cut it and it was impossible to see where you were going. So we walked around to keep ourselves warm until daylight, and being careful not to step off the little ice island we were on into the rather chilly salt water. When it was light enough we started to climb back. Then the ice began to get its work in, splitting and opening up in all directions. But there was no crushing where we were. About four P.M. we managed to get back to the solid pack and picked a place to camp.

Next morning I heard more crushing. We again packed up. We moved south-east a few miles and then south and camped about two miles from the ridge. The Chief and I walked down to have a look at it and found it still crushing a bit, so we concluded to wait another day. We knew the Captain's gang would be along shortly. All hands could then pitch in and cut our way through, for we knew the ridge was solidly grounded on the sea bottom, and once inside it we would be safe. It certainly was there to stay till the

summer. On our way back from this inspection we saw the Captain coming from the north. I walked ahead to meet him and tell him how things were going.

Next morning all hands pitched in with everything they could work with. After a discussion with me the Captain decided to send me with two sleds back to Shipwreck Camp to rush some grub over the ridge on to the landfast ice and we could return from the beach and get it at any time.

We started next morning and arrived at Shipwreck Camp at six P.M. I should judge it was about forty miles. Next day we loaded the sleds. It took us three days to cover on the return journey what we had made in one day coming out.

On the second day about three P.M., I was behind the team when my dogs stopped, turned in their tracks, and commenced growling, their hair standing up stiff. I looked behind me and there was a bear about six feet from the sled. If the dogs hadn't smelt him I should never have known what hit me. They made a break for him and he backed off a few feet, giving me a chance to get my gun and give it to him in the head. We found him about as large as most bears ever get, ten feet from tip of nose to tip of tail, with three inches of fat under his skin. We made camp, for it was getting dusk.

While I was tinkering at the camp and the other boys were cooking, the dogs commenced a racket. I looked up and there was a big bear alongside the sled between me and it, sitting on his haunches and making passes at the dogs. I ran around the sled and got my rifle, which was about four feet from the bear. We were not needing any bear meat, so I tried to frighten him off, but he was too scared of the dogs to pay any attention to me. I did not want him to kill any of the dogs, and finally had to shoot him. As I shot I heard another growling match and another bear piled over a small ridge that was about ten feet from the sled. He had blood in his eye and went for the dogs as if bent on murder. I had to kill him, which closed a pretty good day.

About noon the next day as we were drawing near the ridge,

two men came running to meet us. They were the Chief and one of the sailors, who helped us over the ridge to camp.

The next morning Kurruluk, McKinlay, Mamen and I went back for bear meat while the rest were double-tripping stuff towards the beach. We got ashore on Wrangel, March 12th, having had a fairly good road the forty miles from the ridge. There was plenty of driftwood on the beach [for fuel and house building], which was a godsend to us.

The next morning the Captain sent one of the Eskimos and me out to look for the Mate's and the Doctor's parties, but no sled tracks or other signs were to be found anywhere on Wrangel Island. Big fires were made with wet driftwood to cause smoke which they could see a long way if they were there to see it.

The Captain and one of the natives started for Siberia, on March the eighteenth, with fifty days' rations for the men and thirty days' for the dogs. We learned later they had a fairly easy trip, reaching natives and traders seventeen days after they left us and thirteen days after they left Wrangel Island.

CHAPTER 5

THE SUMMER OF 1914 ON WRANGEL ISLAND

(Continuation of Hadley's Narrative)

SHORTLY after the Captain left, Mamen, Malloch and the Steward left our camp near Waring Point and went to Rodgers Harbour about thirty-five miles south-west, to live through the summer. The native went with them to help. About the end of March, the native returned. On the way back he killed a female bear and two cubs. The next week he and I got two more bears and a small cub.

As there did not seem to be much game near the shore, the Eskimo and I went out to the edge of the landfast ice, forty miles from the coast, and made camp. Next morning, bright and early, we went out to the open water about three miles beyond the ridge and got five seals. For two or three days after that the sealing conditions were bad (the wind blowing on shore, closing up the leads), so the native decided to go ashore with two seals and bring back a load of driftwood to burn, so we should not have to waste good food as we were doing by using seal fat as fuel for heat and cooking. He took the sled we had come with and two dogs, leaving one with me to give me warning in case of the arrival of a bear. He intended to be back in four days.

That night I slept in my sleeping-bag and the dog was fastened to the sled just outside the door. About four A.M. I was awakened by his barking, and that meant a bear. I tried to get out of my white drill bag, but the more I struggled the harder I stuck. Finally, when I got out to my gun I saw the bear and two small cubs disappearing over a ridge. I swore, 'No more sleeping-bags for me,' and for about ten days I slept on top of the bag, but no bears. Then one night it felt pretty cold and, there being no bears, I got into the sleeping-bag. Of course, the same thing happened, even to the hour of four A.M. I finally freed myself from the bag in time to get one shot as the bear was disappearing over a ridge. I then cut the dog loose to see if we could stop the bear. It had been snowing and was pretty dark and both the

dog and I had several hard falls in the pursuit. The rough going did not seem to bother the bear and he got away.

The native had now been away twice as long as he said, but I decided to give him four or five more days. It was blowing hard from the south, and I knew that when the wind dropped there would be open water beside the ridge, with plenty of seals. But I was beginning to worry about the native, so I set out on the fourteenth day. I got to the beach at seven A.M. and found everybody asleep. It seemed the native had loaded up with wood as he had said he would and had started for my camp when he got severely snowblind five or six miles from land and was unable to proceed. After being sick there for some days he had returned ashore.

Shortly after this McKinlay left for his camp at Rodgers Harbour, where he was to stay according to the Captain's orders. He was gone several days and came back with the news that Malloch had died and that Mamen was sick and swelling up, which most of them were doing at our camp, too. He said Mamen could not eat their pemmican and had asked him to go to Skeleton Island, some twenty or thirty miles from our camp, to get him a tin of another kind of pemmican which we had cached there. McKinlay had tried to do this and had got lost to the extent of not finding Skeleton Island, whereupon he had continued along the land until he came to our camp. He was snowblind and played out, so he got the Chief and Fred Maurer to return to Rodgers Harbour to look after Mamen, as Templeman was unable to do it.

From now on the seals began to come out of their holes to sun themselves on the ice and the native and I occasionally got one, which was a change from the pemmican. Birds would fly over us in flocks, but we rarely got one of them on the wing with our rifles. It was then we felt not having a shotgun.

The second of June, McKinlay, the Eskimo family and I left for Cape Waring, where I knew of a crowbill rookery. McKinlay was to take back the sleds and team of three dogs to fetch the rest, who were all sick. Before we arrived at

Cape Waring, we were met by the Chief and Maurer from Rodgers Harbour with the news that when they arrived Mamen had died and the steward was nearly out of his head with the two dead men beside him in the tent. They had come back to get their effects and return to the Harbour.

[Hadley noted in Wrangel Island that the swelling and other symptoms of illness developed most rapidly with those men who ate the most pemmican and, in consequence, the least seal or bear meat. The situation was not thoroughly understood at the time even by Hadley, and his own escape and that of the Eskimos was due merely to the general notion that fresh food was better than 'tinned stuff.' Also it was a matter of taste. The Eskimos and Hadley preferred the fresh meat, and some of the rest fell into their tastes early, which kept them freer than the others from the symptoms of the disease — wholly free, I believe in the case of those who lived mainly on fresh meat, as, for instance, John Munro.]

[On the reasons for the illness the opinion of Munro differs somewhat from that of Hadley. Munro considers that the most active were the freest from the disease, exercise and fresh air being the preventives. He also says there was a peculiar taste to some of the water, presumably from chemicals in the dust of the island that had blown on the snow which they used for drinking purposes.]

We found (Hadley continues) millions of ducks and gulls at Cape Waring. We immediately went to the rookery three miles from camp, but there was not a crowbill in sight, though there were plenty of gulls. I shot twelve gulls, one for each of the party, and then returned to camp, where McKinlay was waiting for me to return with the team and fetch the sick. I put one gull for each of them on the sled and he started back. The native caught a seal during the day, which put us on easy street for the time. Next day McKinlay returned from our old camp with the rest and I thought a few days feeding on ducks and duck soup would bring them around all right. They were swelling up more and more all the time. I put this down partly to the fact

that they lay too much in their houses, never going out. When they made tea they would dig snow from the side of the house for the water.

[Hadley tells elsewhere that they did not think it worth the bother to build log cabins, where they could have burned wood in open fireplaces, but lived in houses with snow walls and canvas roofs, burning in primus stoves kerosene they had brought ashore from the *Karluk*, or else seal fat that might otherwise have been used as food.]

We got ducks and seals most every day and later three ugrugs (bearded seals) and one small walrus. Eventually I told the native to build a small umiak so that when the ice left the beach we could go after walrus, he and I. But he thought a kayak [one-man skin hunting boat] would be better, so he built one, covering it with seal-skins. Later we wished we had an umiak instead, for when we had nothing to do and could get no more ducks we could see walrus drifting by offshore by the hundreds sleeping on the ice cakes. The Eskimo was too scared to go after them in the kayak, for he was always used to hunting them from an umiak. With an umiak there is no trouble about getting meat in Wrangel Island. We had not tried to save or bring ashore the big umiak on the *Karluk*.¹ It had been the intention to let her sink with the ship, but after the *Karluk* sank she was floating around in the water, and I had got permission from the Captain to cut out of her a few pieces of leather for boot soles. These proved very useful later in Wrangel Island, but if we had brought with us the boat itself, we would have had no trouble in killing walrus enough to support us for years.

About this time I made a ladder from driftwood to get eggs from the cliff, but after I packed it over to the rookery I found it about twenty feet too short and could get only twenty-five eggs. Later I made another which was about the right length, and McKinlay, the Eskimo and I took it over and tried to raise it, but it was too heavy for us and we had

¹ See photograph opposite p. 83. For method of transporting such a boat over ice, see lower picture opposite p. 214.

to abandon the idea. Tens of thousands of eggs, and we could not get one of them! I used the short ladder in every place that I could and got small lots of fifteen and twenty and twenty-five eggs.

[For the events of Dominion Day, July 1st, 1914, we shall take for our authority Chief Engineer John Munro, for he, and not Hadley, was in official command at Wrangel Island, and it was, therefore, by his direction that a British flag was raised and possession of the island reaffirmed. I take the following extract from a letter written me by Mr. Munro, dated Oakland, California, April 17th, 1924:

‘At this time Maurer, Templeman and I were located at Rodgers Harbour. . . . On Dominion Day, July 1st, 1914, we raised a Canadian red ensign about twenty feet from the tent, claiming the island as British.’

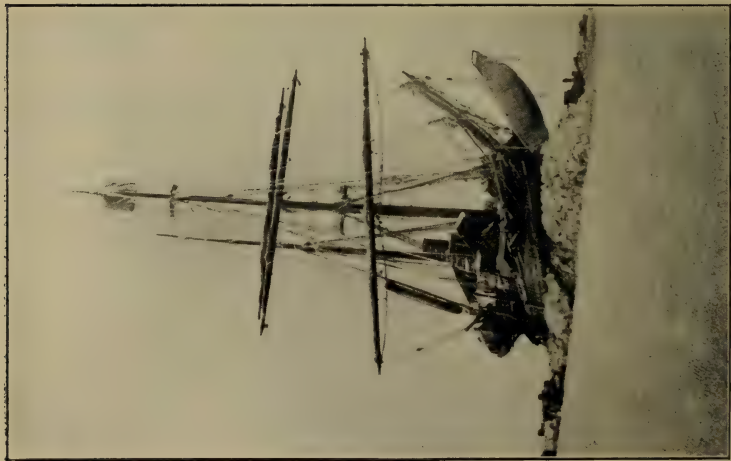
Munro has told me, and you can also see it from the photograph, that it was Frederick Maurer who actually hauled up the flag. The man seen assisting him is Robert Templeman, the steward of the *Karluk*. It was Munro himself who took the photograph.]

For July 3rd we go back to Hadley again: On that day the wind turned to the south-west blowing strong. The ice went off from the beach and disappeared, ending our sealing and duck shooting. The ammunition was getting low and we could not afford to shoot small game, so we got a net that we had been using for fish, though we never caught any, and brought it out to use as a bird seine. The first cast we got about fifty moulting birds, and in all we got about five hundred, so our hungry days were temporarily over.

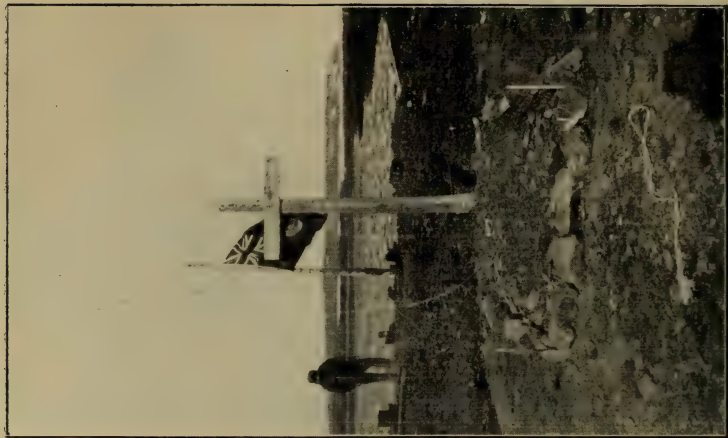
The first part of September the new ice was strong enough for us to go three miles from shore, where we saw several bear tracks and several seals, but no walrus close enough to shoot. As the season was getting late and no ship had appeared, we thought we were in for another winter and would have to be careful of our cartridges. I had about forty-five and the native around fifty, so we decided we ought not to shoot anything but bears and walrus unless we were pinched.



RAISING THE FLAG TO REAFFIRM THE BRITISH RIGHT TO WRANGEL BASED ON ITS DISCOVERY BY CAPTAIN HENRY KELLETT, OF THE ROYAL NAVY, IN 1849. FLAG BEING HAULED UP BY FREDERICK MAURER, ASSISTED BY ROBERT TEMPLEMAN, JULY 1, 1914



THE *Karluk* JUST BEFORE SHE SANK, SHOWING SUSPENDED BELOW THE BOWSPRIT THE UMIK OR WALRUS HUNTING BOAT MENTIONED BY HADLEY.



THE FLAG AT HALF-MAST BY THE GRAVE OF GEORGE MALLOCH ON WRANGEL ISLAND, SUMMER 1914.

The 6th of September the weather was fine and the Eskimo and I went out on the floe, as our ducks were getting low, and I was lucky enough to get two seals. When we came ashore in the evening we got the welcome news that the Eskimo woman had caught about fifty pounds of tomcod, the first we had seen, so we went to sleep quite happy, with great expectations for the morrow.

Next morning we fished for a while with poor luck and then all hands went back to the tent. About ten o'clock the Eskimo went outdoors. A few minutes afterwards he sang out, 'I think I see a ship!' I jumped up, and there, sure enough, was a schooner coming along the island about twelve miles off. I told the native to run out to the edge of the ice and attract their attention, and he was off like the wind. Shortly afterwards she headed in for the floe, where she finally tied up, and our troubles were over. A gang of men climbed over the bow and headed for the beach.

It proved to be the *King and Winge*, of Seattle, owned by Mr. Swenson, who was on board. They had with them a moving picture man with his machine, and he marshalled us up and down for about ten minutes, taking films of us. When that was finished we went on board and started for Nome, where we arrived September 13th, 1914.

(Signed) JOHN HADLEY

We have been following Hadley's manuscript, but nearly every impression I have of Wrangel Island and the adventures and trials of Hadley and his companions comes not from his written account, though the manuscript is about five times as long as the part here printed, but from the stories he told me during the long winter evenings, sometimes with excessive elaboration, but more often in brief, disjointed sentences that would have been incomprehensible to a listener not thoroughly familiar with the whole background of polar environment, sailor ethics, and human nature as it manifests itself in remote isolation under circumstances different from the ordinary routine of sailor life.

Without a trace of callousness, but with a recognition of the

inevitable, Hadley believed that a second winter on Wrangel Island would have meant the death of all those not active and self-supporting. This was not so much because the productive hunters would have refused to share what they got with the others, but rather because he believed in common with Munro, as quoted above, that exercise as well as food, was necessary for health. It seemed to me that the lives of the whole party were saved by the *King and Winge*, but Hadley always maintained stoutly that himself, the Eskimos, and probably two or three of the white men could have lived through the winter and through any number of successive winters. He believed also that these same people could have crossed to the mainland of Siberia, a hundred miles away, after the middle of the winter, and he said they would have done so except for the possibility that some sick people might have been still living at that time to hold them back.

Hadley considered that the entire party from the *Karluk* could have 'had a picnic' on Wrangel Island for one or several years if the following things had been done: The big Eskimo walrus hunting boat (umiak), which had been placed on board the *Karluk* for such an emergency, should have been brought ashore after the shipwreck. Doing this would have necessitated throwing away perhaps a thousand pounds of provisions and petroleum. This Hadley considered would have been of no consequence, for the petroleum was unnecessary in any case, as there was abundant driftwood for fuel on Wrangel Island, and the food thrown away would have been negligible because unlimited quantities of walrus meat and fat could have been secured with the skin-boat. The hunting, or at least, the use of ammunition, should have been confined, he considered, to only a few of the party who either knew already how to use rifles or showed themselves capable of learning quickly. But, as a matter of fact, large quantities of ammunition were fired off by anyone who wanted to, the targets in many cases being distant birds on the wing.

It has been the rule on all exploratory journeys of our various expeditions when we have been living entirely by hunting that no shot was ever fired at an animal smaller than

a wolf. Thus have we been able to maintain for more than ten years an average of over a hundred pounds of meat (live weight) for every bullet fired. Hadley thought this average could have been excelled at Wrangel Island if a skin-boat had been available and if the shooting had been restricted to a few of the most capable men.

To the reader unfamiliar with polar conditions, and even to those polar explorers who are used to living on provisions brought from home, the story of the *Karluk* party on Wrangel Island seems one of unrelieved and inevitable tragedy. Of twenty-five persons involved, eight had been lost during the sixty-mile journey from the shipwreck to the island, and three on the island itself. Nearly every venture in hunting and travel had turned out badly.

But Hadley had lived in the Arctic for a quarter of a century, taking part sometimes in the various activities necessary for self-support and always associated more or less directly with the natives or white people who were making their living by hunting, sealing or fishing. On the basis of what he knew about the north coast of Canada and Alaska, and about Victoria, Banks and other islands where we had been living by hunting for years, Hadley insisted that Wrangel Island was by nature one of the most favourable locations in the polar regions for self-support by people who knew how to avoid becoming victims of their environment, capitalizing the very conditions that to the inexperienced are handicaps and hardships. Adequate supplies of drift timber for the building of comfortable cabins and for indefinite fuel supply are found in Wrangel Island, but in none of the other islands to the north of North America ; in that important respect Wrangel, therefore, excels all other islands. Hadley had never seen walrus so abundant and so easy to get (with a skin-boat); polar bears seemed more numerous than in any locality where he had been. Walrus and polar bears are the largest game animals in the Arctic except the whale, and the easiest for the skilled hunter to secure. Seals, more elusive to even the best hunters, were abundant around Wrangel Island and obtainable, of course, on the same basis there as

in any other arctic country. In winter the island was separated from Siberia by only a hundred miles of average sea ice such as we are accustomed to travel over at about twelve miles a day. On our various expeditions we have sledged across perhaps two thousand miles of similar ice, generally more mobile and dangerous. The numerous hospitable traders and reindeer-owning natives of Siberia, therefore, were near neighbours, as things look to an arctic explorer. Hadley was constantly saying that his next ambition was to go back to Wrangel Island to establish himself there permanently.

We talked much of Hadley's colonizing Wrangel Island with my co-operation. I was as much in love with the Arctic after eleven years as he was after twenty-five. In our mind's eye we could see the northward march of civilization down the great rivers of Canada and Siberia constantly coming nearer that island-dotted Mediterranean between the Old World and the New which we call the Arctic Ocean. We foresaw that air navigation by dirigibles and planes would have a special rôle in this new development and that the arctic islands would, therefore, acquire a positional value in addition to whatever intrinsic value they might have by reason of their mineral riches or their vegetation and animal life. I took it for certain that the first permanent transarctic air route for fast mail and for passengers in a hurry would be north from London and then south to Tokyo. This route would mean a saving of several thousand miles in distance and, in our opinion, would be preferable in some ways to any other flying route between these two great cities. It would, however, lie far from Wrangel Island and would at first sight appear to have no bearing upon its value. But we knew that for a hundred years the treeless prairies of North America had been considered worthless because they had no trees, and then the point of view had suddenly changed so that the farmers actually began to prefer the prairie to the forest. When that change in mental attitude appeared in one part of the American continent (about 1820) it spread rapidly to every other part. Similarly, the success of a

London-to-Tokyo air mail would in a decade change the world's point of view with regard to the polar regions, making those lands coveted that had previously been despised, no matter how far they lay from the routes immediately practicable commercially.

It was these conversations with Captain Hadley that led to the first tentative formulation of the plans of the Wrangel Island Expedition which eventually sailed north. Unfortunately, Hadley could not be in command of it, for he died in San Francisco of influenza during the great epidemic of 1918-19.

THE PLANNING OF THE NEW EXPEDITION

OUR expedition sailed for Wrangel Island in September, 1921, because of our conviction that the world is at the dawn of a revolution in transportation ideas similar to that heralded by Copernicus and Columbus. When the nations of Europe discovered four hundred years ago that the earth could be sailed around by going east or west, they found it necessary to modify not only their intellectual concepts, but also their diplomacy, their foreign policy, and their commercial endeavours. It appeared to us that a similar, if less conspicuous, change would come when the modern nations realized that the earth can be flown around by north and south. Countries that had been far apart from east to west were about to become neighbours across the northern sea.

On a Mercator's map the Arctic looks vast, and seems to be located between continents on the south and nothingness on the north. But on a map which has the Equator for circumference and the North Pole for centre, such as we print at the back of this book, the Arctic looks like a small hub from which the land masses radiate like the spokes of a great wheel. It may be said that on a spherical world any point is central if we choose to consider it so. Mathematically that is right, but from the human point of view it is specious reasoning, for we inhabit the land and not the sea. It is possible to determine the centre of distribution of the land masses. While this does not coincide with the Arctic, it does fall so near the Arctic that the validity of our figure remains undisturbed. The polar sea does hold a position analogous to that of the hub as related to the rest of a wheel. All these things and many others of strategic importance will appear clearly if, with our fast-developing commercial and military flying in mind, you study the map we print at the end of this book.

There must have been a time, before navigation began, when the Mediterranean was a barrier between the peoples of Africa and Europe. But navigation developed through slow centuries. We cannot say in which century it first became

easier to carry a hundredweight across a hundred miles of sea than to transport it over an equivalent stretch of land. That time did come earlier than the Phœnicians, earlier even than the Minoans; and since then we have thought of the Mediterranean as connecting rather than dividing the continents.

The difficulties of crossing the Arctic may seem formidable to-day, but the crossing of the Mediterranean must have appeared more formidable to the earliest experimental navigators who paddled fearfully along its shores,¹ dreading the very breezes which centuries later were destined to become the best friends of more skilful navigators. It took the Europeans and Africans a long time to conquer the Mediterranean, but those who say that the Arctic will 'for ever' remain unconquered should remember that *for ever* is a longer time than all of recorded history. Some practical and well-informed people are already beginning to say that the crossing of the Arctic by aeroplane and airship is a certainty in the next few years. Those who know the polar ocean in the sense in which a sailor knows the Atlantic think equally well of the submarine, and it may not be many years between the first crossing of the Arctic through the air above the ice and the first crossing through the water below the ice. Whenever the Arctic shall become as crossable to us as the Mediterranean was to the Phœnicians, it will become more of a connecting link between the continents than a barrier. The fact of its central location with regard to the lands will then be of paramount importance. The roads between various suburbs tend to run through the centre of a city, and so will the airways between the lands have a tendency to meet and cross in or near the Arctic, because it is near the centre of the land masses. This tendency will become constantly more marked with our growing mastery of the air,

¹ Illi robur et aes triplex

Circa pectus erat, qui fragilem truci

Commisit pelago ratem

Primus . . . says Horace, undoubtedly with the Mediterranean in mind. In English this would be, roughly: 'That man had a heart of oak and threefold brass, who first entrusted his frail bark to the stormy deep.'

and with the northward crowding of civilization into Alaska, Canada, and Siberia.

While the Wrangel Island expedition was based upon the north and south roundness of the earth from the transportation point of view, upon the smallness of the Arctic, its crossability by airship and aeroplane, and its central position with regard to the land masses, there were also subsidiary considerations based upon my historical study of the northward trend of civilization through recorded time¹ and upon my personal observation as to the mildness of Arctic climate when compared with ancient beliefs, the abundance of Arctic vegetation as compared with its general postulated absence, and the richness of the land and sea in lifeless and living wealth.

The polar ocean, so far as we know it, is studded with islands. There is also an area of about a million square miles not as yet explored, and this may or may not contain other islands. These islands, both discovered and undiscovered, have an intrinsic value dependent on their vegetable and animal life and on their resources in minerals. The seas between will also confer value on the lands, for they will have productive fisheries. But beyond their intrinsic value the islands have positional value to the transportation engineer. Some of them are small, but others are far larger than Great Britain. On the headlands of the smaller and on the wide, grassy plains of the larger islands will stand supply stations for airships, providing not only what routine equipment the air navigator may need if he gets there, but also the airships and aeroplanes that will respond like our present coast-guard vessels to SOS signals from distant aircraft in distress.

On the basis of these considerations I began in 1919 to urge upon the Canadian Government the importance of continuous and extensive exploratory work in the Arctic. Hitherto the northern islands have been considered worthless and have, therefore, remained the undisputed property of whatever nation cared to claim them. Now these islands were about to receive a value that would gradually develop until some decades, hence a few of them, at least (and we could not tell

¹ See *The Northward Course of Empire*, London, 1923.

in advance which), would be coveted much as certain tropical islands now are by great nations that quarrel about them.

During the last three hundred years the British have done as much northern exploration as all other European nations combined. Accordingly, they had already the moral claim of discovery and exploration to most of the islands north of America and to some islands north of Asia. I argued it was important for Canada, as a section of the Empire having already a large arctic frontier, to continue the exploration of these islands and to do whatever was necessary to make it clear to the world that they valued them and intended to keep them permanently. It was also important to explore the areas thus far never traversed, both to accumulate information and to acquire discovery rights to any islands that might be found. I thought that five years probably, and ten years inevitably, would see the clear dawn of a normal popular understanding of the Arctic. Then would begin a possibly jealous competition among nations as to which could discover and claim the new islands and as to which had the right to hold permanently territories that had been so long neglected by their discoverers that they had become no-man's land, open for occupation by whatever country might prove sufficiently enterprising.

There were many in Canada who had views similar to mine, and a few who were sufficiently interested to urge them upon the Government. Between us we spent an aggregate of weeks talking to Cabinet ministers and politicians, we wrote reams of semi-confidential letters of argument, we begged and implored. Then came the minor good fortune that one of the European nations, through diplomatic channels, cast some doubt upon the validity of Canadian claims to certain 'Canadian' arctic islands. This kindled interest, for it is human nature to want whatever some one else wants. The Government actually began to spend money, and the plans of an expedition on a great scale took shape.

Then arose a most unfortunate controversy as to who should be the controlling personality in these expeditions. Had there been a clear victory for one or the other of the

two chief candidates, all might have been well. But the worst possible happened. An approximately equal support for each developed in the Canadian Government ; a virtual deadlock was produced. Eventually the supporters of one candidate seem to have proposed to the supporters of the other that, since they could not agree on what to do, they had better agree to do nothing. A telegram announcing this decision reached me in Nevada in the summer of 1921 and broke my heart for the time being.

We have dwelt in previous chapters upon the theoretical considerations behind our belief in a coming new era and our plans for extensive and continuous northern exploration. But I had also been under constant pressure of another sort. The tropical explorer becomes infatuated with the tropics and either returns to them or eats out his heart deploring the circumstances that keep him away. The same is true of the arctic traveller. There are few who once go North without desiring to return there a second and a third time. On my expedition of 1913-18 I had had with me a number of men who had fallen in love with the North and who were pining to get back there. I had told them about the indefinite plans of the Canadian Government, promising that if these materialized I would try to get them an opportunity to go. My files are filled with correspondence begging for such chances. Two of my men, Knight and Maurer, had been specially urgent, and I had promised them the first opportunities.

E. Lorne Knight had just finished his studies in Seattle when he began in 1915 his capable four-year service on my last expedition. He was fitted for pioneer work both by physique and temperament and was popular with his companions. I liked him especially. In 1917 he accompanied me on the longest sledge trip I ever made, and in 1918, when I was ill with typhoid, he accompanied my second-in-command, Storker Storkerson, on one of the most remarkable of polar adventures.¹

It had been my plan to take a small sledging party about

¹ See the Appendix of *The Friendly Arctic* for Storkerson's own story of this remarkable journey.

two hundred miles northward from the north coast of Alaska in March (1918), camp on a substantial floe and drift with it for a year, tenting in summer, building a snowhouse in winter, and living by hunting. According to our views, the floe should have drifted in twelve or thirteen months to a place somewhere north of Wrangel Island, or perhaps north of the New Siberian Islands. It had been the tentative plan that our party would abandon this floe either at the end of one year or two and travel south, landing either on Wrangel Island or on the coast of Siberia. We had relied so often on the game supply of the open ocean that it did not seem to us particularly dangerous to undertake this previously untried adventure. I have never been so eager to do anything. But the typhoid made it impossible, for I was flat on my back for more than four months. In this emergency, the journey was undertaken by my second-in-command, Storker T. Storkerson. Knight was one of three volunteers to go with him. The others were A. G. Gumaer and Martin Kilian.

The plan was carried out. The party went north from Cross Island, Alaska, to a point about two hundred miles farther north than any traveller had penetrated in that region. They made their camp on a floe about eight miles wide and fifteen or more miles long, and drifted with it some four hundred and fifty miles during six months, living, as they had planned, by hunting seals and bears. Toward the end of this period Storkerson became ill of a disease (asthma) which had no relation to the hardships or other experiences of the journey, and because of the illness the party started south in the worst travelling month of the year, October, when they were nearly five hundred miles north of the arctic circle, more than two hundred miles away from land, and when the daylight had become very short.

March and April, with intense cold and perpetual light, are the best months on the mobile sea ice. In summer there is real water between the broken floes which can be easily negotiated in our sled-boats, and there is still continuous light. But in October daylight grows scarce rapidly and there are nearly continuous snowstorms and fogs. The thin

ice lies treacherous under a blanket of snow that gives it the same appearance as the firm stretches. The only safety lies in jabbing your ice spear through the snow ahead continually to discover if the ice is firm or mushy. Storkerson's adventure would have been, but for the skill and judgment of the men who made it, the most difficult and dangerous ever attempted in the Arctic. In his report he sums up thus a journey over shifting and treacherous ice in darkness, fog and storm: 'We started from a point a little over two hundred miles from shore on October 9th and reached land November 8th without accident or hardship.' It is a little hard to realize that, apart from Storkerson's mental attitude toward them and his skill in meeting them, this journey possessed every terror of darkness and ice and gale that has taxed alike the strength, courage and descriptive powers of the explorers of the past. He annotated his statement later by saying: 'We took every ordinary precaution, and no extraordinary circumstance came up.'

With the exception of Storkerson and myself, there was no man living in 1921, not even Nansen, who had travelled as many miles over moving sea ice or who had spent as many days upon it away from a ship as had Knight. Of the great explorers of the past, Peary was the only one who had excelled Knight's record. At twenty-eight he was in age, experience, physical strength and temperamental adaptability an ideal man for the work he so passionately desired to continue.

Frederick Maurer I saw first in 1912 when he was on a whaling ship wintering in the Arctic north of Canada; in 1913 he became a member of the crew of our *Karluk*. He was with the ship when it sank and was one of the men who spent more than six months on Wrangel Island in 1914 after the shipwrecked party landed there. It was he (as we have told in a previous chapter) who raised the flag at the time the British rights to the island were reaffirmed on July 1st, 1914. Maurer was eager to get back to any part of the Arctic, but particularly eager to get back to Wrangel Island, for his knowledge of various other parts of the North led him to consider that as one of the richest and most desirable islands.

One year older than Knight, he was twenty-nine, and qualified by experience, temperament and physical strength.

Shortly before I received the telegram from Ottawa saying that the projected expedition had been postponed for at least a year, I had received another letter from Knight in which he said wistfully: 'I have been away from the Arctic nearly two years now, and it has been quite a long two years.'

In 1921 it was reported in the Press that the Japanese were believed to be penetrating eastern Siberia with a view to wresting it permanently from the Soviet Government of Russia. Some friends of mine who had returned from north-eastern Siberia confirmed the actual Japanese penetration at the time and believed in its permanence. With my great admiration for the Japanese I felt certain that within a year or two they would realize the coming importance of Wrangel Island and would occupy it. Since they were at that time the allies of Great Britain, it would have been all the more awkward to ask them to leave the island. The most Britain could have done would have been to suggest international arbitration, whereupon it might have been decided that, in spite of original British discovery, a present Japanese occupation had more force in 1921 or 1922 than a half-year of British tenancy as long ago as 1914.

By a curious accident an old friend, Mr. Alfred J. T. Taylor, of Vancouver, turned up in Nevada the day I received the heart-breaking telegram from Ottawa. I was worrying over what appeared to me the short-sightedness of statesmen and troubled also because it seemed I was going to be unable after all to provide Knight and Maurer with a chance to go north. The appearance of Taylor cheered me, and in an hour my wrecked hopes had been replaced by a plan he and I thought we could carry through.

Since Wrangel Island was already British, we could keep it British by merely occupying it. As we understood international law, it would make no difference whether such an occupation had been specially ordered by any government so long as the government in question eventually confirmed it. I wired Knight and Maurer to ask whether they would go

to Wrangel Island secretly and whether they would exchange their American for Canadian citizenship in order to make the occupation legally effective. Both replied eagerly in the affirmative. Since I was just then engaged under contract on a piece of work that did not allow me a day's vacation until September, I got Taylor to undertake the actual organization of the expedition. Because the Canadian Government had decided to do nothing for a year, we could not take even them into our confidence. We confided in no one except that Taylor had to place the facts before his private attorney to get an opinion of the legal aspects of the case. The attorney told us that an application for Canadian citizenship by Knight and Maurer would not turn them forthwith British in the sense needed to make an expedition British which was led by one of them. To get around that difficulty, he advised the organization of a limited liability company under the laws of Canada. This company would employ all the men who were on the expedition, and that would make the enterprise indubitably British. Later he revised this opinion, coming to the conclusion that we could not feel the undertaking safely British unless a British subject were at the head of it. This led to the employment of Allan R. Crawford, the son of Professor J. T. Crawford, of Toronto, Canada, to be in formal command. We had previously corresponded about his possibly going north, and I now telegraphed him to join us on the Pacific Coast.

Because of later tragic developments, it is important to explain here how Allan Crawford came to be selected for the Wrangel Island expedition. During the winter of 1920-1 several of us had been carrying on an energetic campaign in Ottawa to interest the Government in the before-mentioned large plans of polar exploration. One of the most enthusiastic was Mr. J. B. Harkin, Commissioner of Dominion Parks, and at that time officially interested in the welfare of northern Canada, since the game laws, which now have been transferred to the North-west Territories Branch, were then under his administration. Spring drew on apace, and we were eager that the expedition should sail that summer.

We were, therefore, trying to get everything ready so that the moment we received approval and money from the Government we could push ahead along various lines. We were temporarily optimistic through having succeeded in getting money set aside for the refitting of the Canadian Government's old exploratory ship, the *Arctic*, and this work was actually going on, in secret, to the extent that the purpose of the refitting and the destination of the proposed voyage were kept hidden. So far so good; but it was almost equally important that we should have a staff of men ready. Mr. Harkin and I, therefore, agreed to write a tentative stereo-typed letter to the presidents of most of the Canadian universities, asking them to nominate young men trained in the sciences and recently graduated from college with whom we might confer to make up our minds whether they might be eligible for polar service.

Eventually we received replies from most of the presidents; but the only correspondence that concerns us here is that with the University of Toronto. We need not copy the whole correspondence, for its essential points are summarized in the first letter written to me by Allan Crawford.

168 WALMER ROAD,
TORONTO,
April 11th, 1921.

MR. VILHJALMUR STEFANSSON,
Harvard Club,
New York City.

DEAR SIR:—

Your letter to Sir Robert Falconer, President of Toronto University, asking him to nominate an assistant on your next expedition, has been referred to me by Dr. W. A. Parks, Prof. of Palæontology. I understand that my name is being sent to you so I thought it might be wise to furnish some further particulars.

I am twenty years old ($1\frac{1}{2}/01$), weigh 151 lb., and am 5' 10" high. I have never had any eye-trouble and I believe my vision is above average. My circulation and heart action

is OK, and I have a good stomach. I have never had any serious contagious disease.

I was under age to go overseas, but I was in the Officers' Training Corps in Canada. I was employed by the Geological Survey of Canada last summer in Algoma and so have had some practical experience in Pre-Cambrian geology. In this matter I might refer you to Mr. Ellis Thomson, Dept. of Mineralogy at Toronto University, or Dr. W. A. Collins, Director of the Survey.

I am writing my third year exams. at Toronto. My college work for the last two years has been chiefly geology, palæontology, chemistry and mineralogy. I have had a good grounding in science and mathematics, having taken the First Edward Blake Scholarship in Science at the Honour Matriculation examination at Toronto University in 1918.

Although I have not written for my degree I find in my course I am up against men much older and more experienced than myself. I feel I could acquit myself much more creditably if I had the opportunity such as you offer. My father, Prof. J. T. Crawford, is quite in accord with my ideas. If you are disposed to consider me we might arrange an interview either in New York or wherever would be convenient to you.

Yours very sincerely,
(Signed) ALLAN R. CRAWFORD

My correspondence with the various applicants from the different Universities gradually led me to the opinion that Allan Crawford was the most promising. He was eager for a decision and so was I, but we could not get definite action from the Government. Once we had thought we had it, for we received the following letter from the Prime Minister:

PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

CANADA

OTTAWA, ONTARIO,

February the 19th, 1921.

DEAR MR. STEFANSSON:—

I have discussed the matters which you laid before me to-day and desire to advise you that this Government pur-

PLANNING OF THE NEW EXPEDITION

poses to assert the right of Canada to Wrangel Island, based upon the discoveries and explorations of your expedition.

I believe this is all that is necessary for your purposes now.

Faithfully yours,

(Signed) ARTHUR MEIGHEN

This letter made Mr. Harkin and the rest of us happy for a day. But a day was all, for we received notice that, while the Government had not exactly reversed their decision to hold Wrangel Island, they had placed the matter again under discussion, asking us to do nothing further until we heard from them a second time. At the time Crawford opened his correspondence with us, we were daily expecting a favourable decision. But we never did hear again except as already indicated, when the Government informed us in general terms that while the proposed expeditions would not be authorized in 1921, they were likely to be authorized in 1922.

But the future was dark with uncertainties of a new sort. The Prime Minister, Mr. Meighen, seemed converted to our point of view, and the like was true of several members of his Cabinet; but an election was looming, and it was by no means certain that Mr. Meighen's government would be in the saddle when the promised 'next year' arrived.

I had been anxious for a personal conference with Allan Crawford, but I was lecturing in the western United States seven days in the week on a five-month contract, and the expense of fetching him so far west was considerable. But an opportunity came when circumstances of another sort took me east to Ann Arbor, Michigan.

I then wrote Crawford as follows:

ELKO, NEVADA,

June 11, 1921.

DEAR MR. CRAWFORD:—

I am not sure I can offer you this year anything attractive in the way of northern exploration, but can you meet me at Ann Arbor, Michigan, June 30—arriving there June 29 to be ready. I am unfortunately tied on a western lecture tour by a contract, but am getting leave to come east for that one day to get an LL.D. degree from Michigan.

It will be but a brief conversation. But on the chance of its coming to something I shall pay your expenses if you will risk the time. Please reply by night letter.

(Signed) V. STEFANSSON

I had still another reason for going to Ann Arbor: I could have a conference there with Sir Auckland Geddes, the British Ambassador to the United States, for he also was coming to Ann Arbor to receive an honorary degree.

In a few days I received the following telegram:

WINDEMERE, ONT., *June 18, 1921.*

Will be Ann Arbor June 29 and 30.

ALLAN CRAWFORD

At Ann Arbor my conversation with Sir Auckland Geddes was satisfactory. As an official he was diplomatically careful. But I inferred a good deal of personal enthusiasm from his insisting that we should discuss Wrangel Island under its original and rightful name of Kellett's Land. He assured me also that the temper of the British people is such that they would be in general in hearty sympathy with us if they understood our views and proposed actions. I then asked him whether he thought the British Government might back us in case the Canadian did not. On this he did not commit himself at all. I also discussed the possibility, not as yet quite definite in my mind, that I might organize a private expedition in case both governments failed to act. In that relation Sir Auckland promised only friendly co-operation in getting me introduced to the Premier and Cabinet of Great Britain in case I sent out an expedition in the summer of 1921 and wanted to go to England that autumn to present my case and get support for continued work in 1922.

My talk with Allan Crawford was even more satisfactory. During a day of intermittent contact I spent with him in the aggregate several hours and formed the high opinion which was intensified later when he joined me on the Pacific Coast, and which has been constantly increased as I have learned the details of his work on Wrangel Island. He had an avid

curiosity and an eager interest in every sort of thing, including politics. He was strongly of the opinion that Mr. Meighen's chances for re-election were uncertain and that, much as we might regret it, we would have to think along the lines of what might happen if another government came to power. When towards evening I finally decided to tell him fully in confidence all the Wrangel Island plans, it was after he had promised that he would keep them secret even from his parents, a promise I have since learned he scrupulously kept. The conclusion was that he was eager for the work and would take all chances, including that of my possible inability to pay him wages in case the Government failed to back us up. I would make promises of wages and keep them if and when I could. The only thing essential was that I would find, without his help, the money for this year's outfitting, although he would have liked to contribute had he had any money. As related hereafter, he was actually better than his word on this point, and really did contribute a little money towards the expedition.

But the conclusion of the Ann Arbor conference could only be that Crawford must return to Ontario and await developments. I would let him know by telegram if the expedition was decided on, and he would be ready at a few hours' notice. Whatever the scale of the expedition, two of his comrades would be Lorne Knight and Fred Maurer, who were both on the Pacific Coast, and the first thing would be for him to meet with them so as to have a few days or weeks of preliminary association to decide whether they were personally congenial.

It was an especial good fortune that there came to meet me at Ann Arbor not only Crawford, but also Captain George H. Wilkins, D.S.O., of the Australian Army, who had been second in command of the northern section of my expedition of 1913-18.¹ This gave Crawford some opportunity to con-

¹ See many references to George H. Wilkins in the index of *The Friendly Arctic*. He is the same who later accompanied Shackleton to the Antarctic. After that he conducted a two-year scientific expedition for the British Museum through tropical Australia. He is now (1925) planning a great scientific expedition to the Antarctic.

verse with a man who had served three years in the Arctic under my command, who knew my ideas and methods of exploration, and who might give a novice sidelights that could not be got from me.

July 1st, Crawford went east and I west with nothing settled, but the final decision of the Government came within the time limit I had given him. As said above, the Government had decided to postpone action for a year. It was then Taylor and I resolved we would act on our own account, trusting to convert the Government to our support (even if it were a new Government) before the year was over. The next step was a telegram to Crawford, and he was soon on his way to join me on my tour. Up to that time Lorne Knight had been assisting me with my lectures, managing the stereopticon and doing whatever else might be necessary. I had no real use for two assistants, but I wanted to give Knight and Crawford unlimited time together, so I got Knight transferred to another position on the same circuit, while Crawford took his place as my immediate helper.

Of the many curious rumours that have gathered around the Wrangel Island expedition is the one that Crawford, Knight and Maurer had been converted to my views by the reading of my evangelistic northern books, *The Friendly Arctic* and *The Northward Course of Empire*. Neither of those books had been published at the time they were with me together, and *Northward* had not even been conceived as an outline in my mind. I did have with me a few chapters of manuscript, for *The Friendly Arctic* was then being set up in type in America, and I frequently talked with Knight and Maurer about the correctness of narratives and opinions in that book, which touched directly their association with the work described. I discussed with Knight, for instance, the section about his illness with scurvy and I talked over with Maurer Captain Hadley's narrative of the seven months spent by him, Maurer and the fifteen others on Wrangel Island. Both Knight and Maurer had heard me lecture frequently, narrating experiences of which they had themselves been part. It is, of course, conceivable that they might have

been convinced of some new thing by hearing my presentation, but it is far more likely that they would have discovered my errors of fact or argument had I been wrong, losing confidence rather than gaining it from hearing anything which I said that was not strictly in accordance with the facts as they knew them or with the views which they themselves had deduced from those facts. Knight was of an active temperament, but Maurer was more contemplative, and his mind, at least, contained many theories, as well as the memory of the experiences from which they had been deduced. We all talked these over now and then and seldom found ourselves in disagreement.

While Knight and Crawford were constantly together as we travelled from town to town, it was only occasionally that they saw Maurer, who was lecturing about his work as an arctic explorer on a tour that 'covered' smaller towns nearby. Crawford made many attempts to get me to talk to him at length about conditions as I found them and the methods in which I believed. But I avoided this in general, urging that it was more important he should know the views of the men with whom he was going to be associated in the field. If he was in doubt about these or thought they were in conflict with something he had heard me say, he and Knight were to discuss such discrepancies with me. They did so perhaps two or three times, and we soon arrived at an understanding. In fact, so far as I remember, the differences turned out to be apparent only.

It took us several weeks to get all details arranged. Most of that time Crawford spent with me, and part of the time Knight and Maurer were with us also. There never were happier boys than the two veterans. They were so exuberant that it was difficult to realize that they were twenty-eight and not eighteen. Knight told by the hour stories from his four adventurous arctic years. What Maurer contributed was equally enthusiastic and even more to the point, for he had actually been on Wrangel Island for six months and was in a position to tell the rest of us about the climate, the vegetation and the abundance of sea and land game. Crawford was

soon infected with their enthusiasm. The contagion spread also to Milton Galle, a Texas boy of twenty, who had been for some time acting as my secretary. On the recommendation of the other three and at his own request, I decided to make him the fourth member of the party. The later story of the expedition shows that he turned out loyal and capable, as good a comrade as anyone ever had, whether in lean times or in days of plenty.

Crawford was to be in command because the central idea was that the enterprise must be British. But the relation of Crawford and Knight was to be somewhat that of the ship's captain to a pilot when the ship is entering a harbour and when, on the theory that the pilot knows best, the captain for the time being suspends his authority. This was not as good an arrangement from the viewpoint of efficiency and safety as if we could have put either Knight or Maurer in command. Still, the personality of Crawford seemed to be such as to make the plan tenable. The events of the next two years showed that in this we made no mistake. Through his character and ability Crawford proved a real commander even while following out the ideas of his more experienced companions. In a diary kept by Knight for two years there does not appear a single criticism of Crawford or any comment to the effect that anything was done that did not thoroughly meet the approval of both Knight and Maurer. A search through the manuscript records of famous expeditions would show that such uniformly friendly co-operation through two years of isolation is almost unique in polar history.

How enthusiastically and quietly the preparations were made is well brought out by a letter which Knight wrote me on June 18th, 1921, from his home in McMinnville, Oregon, where he says: 'I never wanted to do anything in my life as bad as I want to get away from here. . . . There has been a great deal of speculation at our house on where I am going, but they are still in the dark. Dad is excited stiff.' This shows that Knight, as well as all the others, was keeping their particular destination secret even from his parents.

Another letter from Knight says: 'Of course, you must realize that I am very anxious to go north under your direction and am waiting eagerly. . . . Last night Maurer lectured in Amity and I brought him home in a car. We were together all day and he continually talked about the North. I think (if possible) he wants to get back up there as bad as I do. No doubt he has told you all this. . . . He continually talks Wrangel Island.'

A part of the preparations for the expedition was that Fred Maurer wanted to get married. The tour on which he had been a lecturer had closed and he had joined me for a few days on my circuit, the itinerary of which was approaching Missoula, Montana. If he wanted to be married, Missoula was the place, for I had there several old friends, among them two university classmates. I had just learned that Charles Clapp had been elected to the presidency of the University of Montana, and I knew that Mr. and Mrs. Clapp would be glad to have the wedding at their home. A telegram was accordingly sent, and Miss Delphine Jones, of Niles, Ohio, took the next train for Missoula, a two days' journey. They were married on August 11th. Their bridal trip was another thousand miles west to Seattle, where Mrs. Maurer remained for a few days while the outfitting of the party was being completed. When they sailed for Nome she took the train alone back to Ohio.

In order to camouflage our real plans, we had been hinting commercial development when it was necessary to talk for publication at all. On July the second Knight wrote again from McMinnville: 'All the papers on the Coast have printed articles concerning your commercial enterprise. The Portland Telegram perpetrated an awful poor pun when they said, "Stefansson's northern enterprise should cut some ice." I hope I have a chance to show them what kind of ice we will cut.'

On August 16th the party was assembling in Seattle, and Knight wrote me: 'Maurer arrived this A.M., all grins. He seems to be happy. We all are, for that matter, and aching to get started.'

The party made the nine-day voyage from Seattle, Washington, to Nome, Alaska, by passenger steamer. On September 4th, Knight wrote from Nome: 'We are having a nice, easy time at your expense; but I would rather be far out on the "bounding sea" bound for the place that we are bound for.'

From the beginning of our plans about a northern expedition independent of the Canadian Government, the understanding had been that the men who went north would do the work and that I would not only find the money for the initial voyage, but also undertake to convert to our plans whatever government might be elected in Canada. But by the time the four men had been together for a week, their enthusiasm had mounted so that they wanted to be sharers in the financial side as well as in the work. Knight had no money and did not know where he could borrow, so he arranged to co-operate financially by having part of his wages due from the company paid monthly into an account for the purchase of \$1,000 worth of shares. Fred Maurer borrowed \$1,000 from his brother, John Maurer, of New Philadelphia, Ohio, purchasing ten shares.

Before sailing north Crawford arranged for the purchase of \$500 worth of shares. After he reached Nome he mailed our company back a cheque for \$100 to purchase a two-year option on shares for \$1,000. I think all the men took pains to make it clear to their relatives that they were doing this at their own desire. An example of how thoughtful they were in this matter I take from a carbon which Crawford kept in the expedition records duplicating a letter he wrote to his mother on August 18th, 1921, three hours before he sailed for Alaska from Seattle. 'On very careful consideration I have done something which may seem unwise to you, but as I am situated, it seems like a very fine thing. I am taking five shares of stock in this company. The payment is \$50 a month for ten months. This I did without any suggestion on the part of Stefansson (he is the company) or anyone else.

CHAPTER 7

THE OUTFITTING AND THE VOYAGE TO WRANGEL

AT Nome the party gave the finishing touches to their simple outfit. All decisions were based upon the extensive arctic experience of Knight and Maurer. They never reported to me exactly what they were taking and I never worried about the missing report. I knew they must have taken what I would have taken in their place, for my arctic experiences had been the same as theirs, and our views would, therefore, necessarily be about the same. What these views were can best be made clear by repeating a story which Knight used to tell when trying to explain the Arctic to people who had never been north. I have told the story myself in print, but never so fully as I shall now, for the lesson of it has never been so pertinent.¹

In the late winter of 1917 Knight found himself one of a party of four who were travelling with two dog teams at about 80.5° North Latitude and 110° West Longitude. There were two other white men in the party, Harold Noice and myself, and an Eskimo boy of about twenty, Emiu. For both Knight and Noice it was towards the end of the second year of their arctic experience. Although Emiu was an Eskimo, he had really no more experience than they, for he had been brought up in the city of Nome and had hunted only rabbits and ptarmigan somewhat as a farm boy might hunt rabbits and grouse farther south. It was my ninth winter of polar travel. Both officially and by experience I was in command, and our general course was planned by me. Apart from that general consideration, our progress and success depended about equally upon each one of us four.

According to the devious course one would have to travel by reason of the configuration of lands and seas, we were, when the trouble came upon us, about seven hundred miles from our own nearest ship and about the same distance from

¹ For another version of the story we are about to tell here, see *With Stefansson in the Arctic*, by Harold Noice, London and New York, 1924.

the nearest other human beings, the Eskimos of Victoria Island. We were on the open ocean, a hundred and forty miles from the last land we had seen, Borden Island, and more than a hundred miles north-west of the nearest land, Ellef Ringnes. The ice we were travelling over was in sluggish motion, the direction depending upon the winds which not only drove it before them, but also broke it into fragments, some the size of a piano, some as big as a farm, and the largest perhaps fifteen or twenty miles across. Most of this ice had been formed the previous year and was heavy; but some was only a few days old, thin and treacherous. There were also long lanes of open water between the floes, yards or miles in width, and vast, many-cornered areas here and there. Some of the floes were a hundred feet thick and they averaged a good deal heavier than the polar ice as a whole. The average thickness of winter ice in the Beaufort Sea would be about four or five feet, and Beaufort ice is usually considered the heaviest in the Arctic.

Although the ice was exceptionally heavy, we did not realize it so much through appearance as through the comparative scarcity of seals and the entire absence of polar bears. It was one of the poorest game districts I had ever traversed, and the poorest ever seen by my companions. But they were cheerful, for they relied upon our uniform experience that on the polar sea the areas devoid of game, while possible anywhere, are never of very large extent. One can always find game by merely travelling doggedly ahead in any constant direction. Vacillating and zigzagging might confine you within such an area, but a straight course would certainly take you out.

But in this case consistent progress became impossible, for two of our party of four were seriously ill. Both Knight and Noice had been complaining of lassitude, pain in their joints, discomfort and gloom. Their gradually developing pessimism was especially disturbing to me, for both were normally of smooth and optimistic temper. That the Eskimo boy was also becoming pessimistic did not worry me, for he was of the mental type which takes its colour readily from

others. Through two years I had found him contented when others were contented and depressed when they were depressed.

Gloom is an early symptom of scurvy, and so we began to suspect that disease. In any case, there was something so seriously wrong that it seemed wiser to turn back. The illness alone would not have led us to that decision, nor would the scarcity of game without the illness. But the combination of the two stopped us, although we had been pressing forward eagerly on one of the most important journeys of our five-year expedition. We had already penetrated far into the undiscovered ocean. To the pure scientist it is of equal importance to find land or to find the absence of land in an area being explored. One fact is as significant as the other for a larger knowledge of the earth. But there are few so purely scientific that popular acclaim is quite meaningless. The crowd considers that the discovery of land is success, and that the discovery of the absence of land is failure. They forget that the explorer cannot alter what he finds and should not be held responsible for anything but a true report of the nature of his discovery. It seemed to all of us that we had the approval of the crowd almost within our grasps, for the signs of land not far ahead were becoming more numerous every day. We saw ourselves as its discoverers, and my companions were reluctant to give up. But the decision was mine, and I believed our lives were in danger. So we turned and began the struggle back towards Ringnes Island.

I have frequently heard Knight tell the story of the turning back and the vicissitudes of the journey. He always emphasized how sorry he was that I decided to retreat, arguing that we could have continued safely and that we might have made as successful a cure of his disease on the new land we would have discovered ahead as on the already known land to which we did return. That was the optimism of the real explorer. In that respect, among others, he was better fitted to command than I, whose orders turned us back.

The return to land across a hundred and twenty-five miles of chaotic ice was both difficult and in reality dangerous.

Frequently we had to make long detours to get around open water and to find a place where the floe we were on touched the next floe to the south-east of us, so that we could step across. The illness of the two men was steadily developing, but we were afraid to pause, although we needed fresh meat for the cure. We might have secured it a hundred miles from land by camping and hunting, as we had often done before. But game signs were few, and I felt that under the particular conditions we had better not risk a delay at sea, but press on towards the shore lead for a better prospect of seals. If the shore lead were closed when we got to it, we would search for caribou on the land just beyond.

It became clearer every day that the disease was scurvy. I had held for many years the theory that scurvy could be cured by fresh meat, and we had more or less proved it already on the expedition. According to that view, Ēmiu and I were in no danger, for we had been eating fresh meat all winter. The other two had been living away from us on tinned food, or else on fresh meat the antiscorbutic value of which had been destroyed by overcooking. Had we found a large patch of level ice with indications of seals, or open water with seals swimming in it, we should have camped to hunt and attempt the cure. But we knew the area to be bad for sealing, since we had already crossed it that spring, outward bound. Our casual glances at the various patches of open water as we passed had given us glimpses of one, two or three seals in a week – enough perhaps to cause us to stop had we feared worse conditions elsewhere, but not enough to delay us when we felt reasonably sure of better chances ahead.

According to our general policy of living by hunting, we had started north from Borden Island some three weeks before with only a little food in our sledges, and this was now almost gone. For the second time on that five-year expedition we went on rations – about half as much as we needed. The dogs were also put on half rations, their food consisting in large part of worn-out skin clothing. Even this eventually gave out, and before we reached land we had begun to feed

them with some new clothes that we had been saving for next summer – waterproof sealskin boots, etc.

As we struggled slowly towards shore the invalids grew steadily weaker. The last two or three days before landing, Noice was unable to walk and had to be hauled on the sled. Knight could not walk by himself, but was able to stumble along holding on to the back end of the sled for support. With grit such as few possess, he occasionally even used the failing remnants of his great strength to help the sleds over bad places.

The journey was a hard enough experience for the Eskimo and me, but harder for the sick men, because of their physical suffering and because of the gloom, approaching melancholia, which is a symptom of their disease. But to hear Knight tell it afterwards he must have worried less than I, and that could mean only that he had a firmer confidence than I in the theory on which we were working – that game would be found and that fresh meat would cure the scurvy.

Handicapped as we were by the rough ice, the sick men and the weakening dogs, it took us sixteen days to get ashore. When we landed in north-western Ellef Ringnes Island, we had half rations for the men for six days and half rations for the dogs (consisting mainly of new skin clothing) for six days also. We were still five hundred and fifty miles from the nearest human beings, so that our lives could be saved only by success in hunting.

We did not stop when we finally got to the shore lead, for it was temporarily closed by a west wind. The three-mile belt of ice between it and the beach was smooth, and the tired men and dogs made fairly easy progress along the coast to the south-east while I walked a long curve inland searching for game. I remember it as a discouraging experience, for in twelve or fifteen miles I did not see a sign of a living thing nor even a blade of grass. In my whole arctic experience I have never been so near discouragement as I was that night when I came into the camp where the sick men were lying. I have no recollection of just what I said and I made no diary entry, but Noice has recorded that my comment

was, 'Well, boys, we seem to have found at last one of those barren arctic islands that we have read so much about!'

After a night of gloom and a breakfast of forced cheerfulness the sick men and Emiu again proceeded along the coast while I hunted inland. About five miles from the camp I discovered some old caribou tracks, and a little later others not so old. Then I came upon the fresh trail of about twenty caribou.

It was now only a question of patience, for nine years of living in the Arctic by hunting had naturally put me in possession of the necessary technique for getting caribou. Hunting is much like any other skilled occupation; the things that seem difficult to the apprentice and impossible to the outsider are matters of routine to the adept. There are good hunters in every part of the world; but arctic hunters are few and the conditions peculiar, so that it may be worth while to tell just how you go about it when securing any particular animal is a matter of life and death. In a good game country we often proceed carelessly, thinking that if we don't get this band we shall soon find another. But the previous day had convinced me that Ellef Ringnes Island is by no means a paradise for game. Our plight and the fewness of caribou made it imperative that I should get the animals that had made this trail. Luckily it was the season of perpetual daylight, so that I had on my side the most important element of a successful hunt — unlimited time.

When there is wind, caribou ordinarily travel facing it. Had there been a wind, I could, therefore, have taken the trail with a certainty of catching up within a few hours, for they never travel fast unless scared by wolves. But this was a day of calm, with airs fluctuating from one direction to another. A change of wind would bring my scent to the caribou; the silence would enable them to hear me walking at half a mile, for the weather was still cold, and it is one of the characteristics of the arctic winter that on a still day you can hear any given sound from five to ten times as far as you can in the warm summer. After a glance at the trail which assured me that the band numbered between fifteen and

twenty-five, I turned in the direction opposite to the one they had been travelling and walked rapidly a mile or more to the top of a high hill. From the hill-top I examined the ground carefully in every direction with my field-glasses, hoping to see the band in question and thinking it possible that another might be somewhere else. But nothing was to be seen except the white lowlands and the grey hills where the grass was not completely covered by the snow — for we were now in a country very different from that of yesterday. Then it was barren gravel, and now it was grassy prairie.

Without actually remembering it, I would judge, from the general method of arctic hunting, that I spent perhaps an hour on the top of that hill waiting for the possible emergence from cover of animals that were grazing. I next walked a mile or two at right angles to the course the caribou had been taking, and from the top of another hill re-examined the country with my glasses. There was nothing to be seen. Since this viewpoint gave me a conspicuously different angle from the previous one, I considered it likely that I had seen all the near country to the south and that no game was hidden less than three or four miles away. I accordingly walked with confidence a mile or two in the direction of the caribou and then climbed a hill cautiously from the north, making sure that I should not expose myself suddenly against the skyline to watchful eyes beyond. But there was no beast to see or be seen, and so I proceeded to another hill that lay at right angles to the trail. After this sort of zig-zagging for several hours, I eventually came in view of the caribou, which had then just moved to the top of a hill. The next thing was to wait for an hour or so until, in their slow grazing, they had moved beyond the skyline.

A light but fairly steady wind had now sprung up, and I could begin to rely on the direction in which it would carry my scent. But it was not strong enough as yet to carry away the noise of my walking in the sometimes crusted snow. My estimate was that, with the slight breeze, the caribou could hear me something between a quarter and half a mile on level ground. When there was a hill between them and me,

they could not hear me quite so far. I accordingly went directly but slowly and cautiously towards the ridge over which they had disappeared. When I got to the top they were half a mile away on some level ground. For the time being, a closer approach was impossible.

During this whole time there had been a slight haze, more trying to the eyes than the most brilliant sunshine on the whitest arctic snow. It was imperative that my eyes should be in perfect condition when I began shooting. For that reason, and also to pass the time away, I lay down flat, face downward, on my arms and went to sleep. The temperature was probably well below zero. Accordingly, the chill woke me in less than half an hour, even in spite of my excellent fur clothing. It is one of the common arctic superstitions that you must not go to sleep out of doors for fear of freezing to death before you wake up, the cold being supposed to have a soporific effect. The opposite is true, as anyone can discover for himself by trying to sleep in winter with insufficient bed covering.

On awakening from the first nap I found the caribou still unapproachable on flat land. Accordingly, I crawled back well into the concealment of my ridge, walked around there for a few minutes till I got warm, then crept back to the skyline, took a good look at the caribou, and went to sleep again. By alternating short naps with walks, to get my blood in circulation, I whiled away two or three hours. The caribou now commenced moving again, and finally passed beyond another ridge. By that time the wind had freshened enough so that it deadened the sound of my walking. All I had to guard against was being seen.

When next I came in sight of the caribou they were still too far from cover for successful shooting. At five hundred yards I could have killed two or three of them, but we needed the whole band. I was preparing for another long wait when all of a sudden the clear outlines of the animals became hazy, and I realized that a light fog was coming up. Only the future could tell whether this would be for good or evil. The fog gradually thickened until the caribou were

swallowed up in it. Knowing that my eyesight was a little better than theirs, I now crawled ahead until I saw the outline of the nearest one through the mist. Evidently this was a straggler well behind the others, and a wait was again necessary. The caribou were slowly grazing away from me, as I could tell by the gradual disappearance into the fog of their single accidental rearguard. As this animal faded I crawled ahead, and when it became more distinct I stopped. After about half an hour of this intermittent slow pursuit the fog rolled away and the entire band were clear before me, some of them at the foot of the slope down which I was crawling and others on the level beyond. The nearest were perhaps a hundred yards away and the most remote about three hundred and fifty. I was in their clear sight now, but that only meant I must keep still, or else move only with such stealth as makes imperceptible the progress of the hands of a clock. No wild animal familiar to me is intelligent enough to be frightened by the sight of a thing which does not seem to move.

During all this time I had been worrying about the success of the hunt with relation to what my companions might do. I was afraid that from the seacoast, where they were traveling, they might have seen the caribou outlined against the sky on top of one of the hills. My general rule was well understood, that two men must never go after the same band of caribou, and I knew that under ordinary circumstances the boys would obey. But this was no ordinary case. They were worried and ill, and their lives and mine were at stake. They would ask themselves whether it might not be possible that I had failed to see these caribou. I might be ten or fifteen miles beyond them now.

Had that been so, the thing to do would have been to let Emiu try. He was not a very good hunter, having had little experience. I think up to this time he had killed only half a dozen or a dozen caribou in his life — all of them on our expedition.

I feared it might have been decided that Emiu should try the hunt. Even when working with a concerted plan, two

hunters, in my opinion, are not so good as one; when working without plan, either may easily spoil the other's chances. When the fog lifted my mind was at length freed from this worry, for the caribou were in a position where they could not be approached except from my direction, and a hunter coming up behind me would be bound to see me as soon as he saw the caribou. That would be his warning to keep hands off.

As I wanted the whole band, I now used a method of shooting designed to that end. When described it may seem cruel, but it is in reality the least cruel of all methods, for by it every animal fired at will be dead within a few minutes, while an indiscriminate blazing away, not uncommon among hunters, whether native or white, will allow wounded animals to escape to a torture that will end days later either by death from the wounds directly or from wolves that will get a crippled animal more easily than those that are unhurt.

A caribou shot through the brain will drop so instantaneously that it frightens the herd. One shot through the heart will usually sprint at top speed anything up to a hundred yards, and that frightens the band still worse. Neither of these shots is, therefore, permissible if you want to secure an entire band. I accordingly waited until an animal near the middle of the herd, but not very close to the other caribou, presented its side to me. I then took careful aim so that the bullet should pass through the body just back of the last rib. A beast thus wounded will stagger at the blow, but will not run. It evidently has no idea of what has happened, but feels a pain or discomfort which induces it in a few minutes to lie down in a manner identical with the quiet lying down of a well-fed ruminant that is going to rest and chew the cud. Caribou are like sheep about imitating each other. If one runs they all run, and if one lies down they are likely all to lie down. The noise of the rifle does not startle the arctic caribou, for it resembles the cracking of lake ice, which sound is frequently repeated any day the temperature is rapidly dropping. Such changes of temperature happen often enough so that caribou in winter seem to be in constant and

placid expectation of loud and sharp noises. When the wounded animal lay down, the others glanced at it, and then went on feeding. As an additional precaution, I shot two others similarly, upon which not only they lay down, but several unwounded animals as well.

Being gregarious, caribou at a distance from the main band will run towards the centre of the band if frightened. I made use of this principle in killing the next animal, which was the one farthest from me. I waited till it faced slightly towards the herd and put a bullet near the heart. It ran at top speed for forty or fifty yards, and then fell so suddenly that it turned a somersault. This startled the herd, and the animals that had lain down of their own accord jumped up; but they were reassured by seeing the wounded still lying apparently at ease. I now followed by shooting those at the outer edge of the band both towards the right and the left. When each fell, the ones nearest would run away from it towards the centre of the herd. It was perhaps around the fifth or sixth shot that a stampede was threatened, for one animal started off determinedly at right angles. I don't think they would have run far because of the quieting effect of the wounded that were lying down; but I was able to kill the leader, and that stampeded back those that were immediately following.

At this stage the herd did not give the impression so much of being frightened as of being dazed or puzzled. A thing that startled me had no effect on them – shots began to be fired behind me, and the bullets whistled over my head. I knew in a moment, of course, that it was Emiu, and was thankful that he had not interfered sooner. He must have been two or three hundred yards behind me, and it is not likely that more than half of his bullets took effect. Whether they did or not was of no consequence, for the animals were all within easy reach of my rifle and the stage of their wanting to run away had long passed. When I had shot all the others, I killed also the three originally shot through the abdomen, which were still lying quietly with their heads up, much like cows resting in a pasture.

I have told this story from my own point of view, and have

given the details to show the reader what sort of hunting methods it was we had used year after year of self-support on the expedition of which Knight had been a member. Uniform success under what often seemed the greatest handicaps had developed quite naturally the firm confidence which Knight so often expressed. I have even heard him say, and Noice has said the same thing, that, sick and five hundred and fifty miles from the nearest neighbour, they never worried about a possible failure of the hunt. The disease of scurvy does not impair the appetite, and Knight used to say that, while he kept wondering how long it would be till he got the next square meal and that while he was also getting pretty tired of being sick, the idea of death from starvation never bothered him. When the story has been told either by Knight or Noice, I have frequently heard the criticism made by their audience that they did not tell it in such a way as to bring out the element of suspense – our distance from the nearest human beings, the illness which crippled our party, and the uncertainty of getting game in time. I have always sympathized with these critics, for both my memory and diary tell that I was a bit frightened. I have had the feeling that in the subsequent rapid and exhilarating recovery when they got plenty of underdone meat to eat both sick men must have lost the memory of their previous gloom and worry.

It took only three days until the acute symptoms of scurvy had disappeared. There had been the blackest gloom in their minds and pain in their every joint, but both vanished after three days of underdone and raw meat. Their travelling strength came back more slowly, and it was several weeks until we were on the road again. Only after we got back to 'civilization' did I realize that this experience had planted in the mind of Lorne Knight a faith in the safety of northern travel even greater than my own.

The preceding digressions are intended to show the manner in which had been formed Knight's ideas of a proper outfit for living one or several years on an uninhabited arctic island. They were based in general upon four years of polar service and in particular upon the two sledge journeys in which we

had shared. The first of these journeys was the longest I ever made, and in some respects the most difficult and dangerous. It had led us over unexplored seas covered with shifting ice and over lands practically unknown, although they had been discovered either by ourselves on previous journeys or by others. The second of Knight's journeys, that with Storkerson, described in the previous chapter, can be fairly considered one of the most remarkable in the entire history of polar exploration, for it was then for the first time that men voluntarily camped on a drifting ice floe with supplies intended only to take them through the early stages of an adventure where tragedy was inevitable if the hunting failed. From the point of view of the difficulty of the undertaking, a man of such experience was bound to look forward to a winter or two on Wrangel Island with more or less contempt. After what Maurer had told him about Wrangel, Knight must have considered it a paradise compared with other arctic lands. Some of his previous journeys had been in islands two to five hundred miles farther north; if northerliness be a handicap, then he had certainly seen a good deal worse. These Canadian islands of his past experience had been devoid of driftwood for fuel. On some we had used twigs and resinous grasses, and on one (Lougheed Island) we had failed to find anything with which to make a fire. But the beaches of Wrangel, by Maurer's account, were piled with firewood and with long, straight logs suitable for the building of cabins to be heated with open fires or stoves.

Moreover, Knight had already travelled through a region where for two successive years we had never seen the track of a polar bear, but Maurer told of the bears on Wrangel going by twos and threes and half-dozens, the beach trampled down with their tracks. Against the scarcity of birds and nests where Knight had been on Meighen and the Ringnes Islands, there were seabird rookeries at Wrangel and tens of thousands of geese and other birds flying in clouds. He had been ill more than five hundred miles from the nearest human beings with less than half rations for a week on hand, and it seemed to him, in looking back, that he had not

worried even then. Now, when he looked forward to probable good health on Wrangel Island, only a hundred miles away from the hospitable American and Russian traders and the wealthy and equally hospitable natives of Northern Siberia, it seemed to him that a shipload of goods would be almost a superfluity, and that with a sledge and a team of dogs, he could land on Wrangel an outfit that would keep him safer and more comfortable than he had been used to being on his former expedition. Indeed, it had been his plan and Storkerson's on their trip in 1918 to land on Wrangel if they had drifted that far west. Their outfit then would have been two sledges, empty except for cooking gear, ammunition, old clothes, and a few scientific instruments. With such an outfit they had planned to land on Wrangel in May, spend the summer there, and proceed to Siberia the following January. To men of the experience of Storkerson and Knight, this would seem easier and safer than several journeys in which they had already taken part.

With Maurer's experience of Wrangel Island and the theories he and Knight held in common, it was logical for Crawford to do what we had agreed he should do and to buy an outfit both in Seattle and Nome based on the idea that there were a few necessities in the way of hunting equipment and beyond that everything was in a sense a luxury. Whether they bought chewing gum, a phonograph or a bag of sugar, they were, in their own minds, deciding only for one luxury as against another. Each luxury they took depended on their taste, on their slender finances, and on the transportation problem, for they were going to engage a schooner rated only as carrying ten tons.¹

The outfit taken by the Wrangel party seemed adequate to them, but grotesquely inadequate to the 'sour-doughs' and tradesmen of Nome.

It was lumber and tar paper, canned fruit and bacon that the Alaskans expected to see going aboard the *Silver Wave*. When they saw that the outfit was wholly different and the

¹ They originally planned to charter the schooner *Orion*, but they eventually took the much larger *Silver Wave*.

quantity very small, there began at once a criticism as to supplies and method which kept growing constantly after the ship sailed.

Alaska is only just beginning to develop soberly out of her original state as a gold country where one man in a hundred made his fortune by some spectacular accident and the other ninety-nine spent year after year in dreaming that their turn was about to come. One who does not know the typical gold miner might think that gold and its probable discovery would be the one subject for reliable judgment; but the reverse is the case. The prospector who is hard-headed and practical on every other subject will swallow the fishiest yarn where gold is concerned. There is only one way in which you can make it difficult for yourself to spread a rumour about the discovery of gold, and that is by talking loudly and freely. Assume secrecy, or even the slightest reticence as to where you have been or where you are about to go, and rumours of gold 'strikes' will grow day by day and spread until some night half a dozen parties set out, each trying to do so without the knowledge of the others and each following some clue to which no rational person would pay any attention.

The Wrangel Island party had been markedly reticent on the passenger steamer from Seattle, and in consequence the rumour of some sort of gold discovery had already germinated among their fellow passengers before they got to Nome. The outfit they were buying seemed curious and, from the Alaska point of view, certainly inadequate for a party going to any uninhabited region. This gave the theorists two 'facts' to work on: Gold had been discovered, and it must be in the vicinity of some trading post where the party could buy the supplies which they were not taking with them. Few gold miners have been on the north coast of Alaska, but there is current the general knowledge that the arctic coast has a string of fur trading posts. Obviously these were being relied upon by Crawford's party. Possibly some of these remote fur traders might even be in secret league with us. Accordingly, it became pretty definitely

known that their destination was 'somewhere east of Point Barrow.'

The owner of the schooner *Silver Wave* was Captain Jack Hammer. When Crawford went to him with a proposal to charter his ship for a voyage to an unnamed destination the skipper quite properly refused to negotiate unless he were let into the secret. Had our party understood better the gold miner's psychology, they might perhaps have said that they were going 'somewhere east of Point Barrow.' But, beyond reticence, they knew no guile, and so they told the truth. Hammer was to know privately that they were going to Wrangel Island, but he must not tell anyone. But that is exactly the formula which, according to miner logic, is to be interpreted as meaning the opposite of what it says, and when the story spread from Captain Hammer it seems to have been agreed that one destination might now be eliminated. Wherever our party were going, they were not going to Wrangel Island. Still, the wording of the agreement was that the ship was chartered for that voyage. I do not think the boys guessed Captain Hammer's scepticism about Wrangel or the theories he held about their plans until on the actual voyage, when he began to show more and more surprise that he was not asked to change his course, his instructions remaining that Wrangel was the destination. The party got the distinct impression that it had been the Captain's shrewd design to demand a higher fee for the voyage whenever Crawford should go to him and own up that the destination was really 'somewhere east of Point Barrow.'

In our discussions before the party left Seattle it had been agreed that, while most of what they spent money for at Nome was optional, there were two things imperative – hunting gear and Eskimo families. Under the hunting heading would come arms and ammunition, fishing nets, fish hooks, harpoons, and the like. But perhaps most important of all would be an Eskimo skin boat of the type called a umiak. As made in Western Alaska, a umiak consists of a framework of driftwood or possibly imported lumber, and over it is stretched a covering made of the skins of bearded seals,

walrus, or beluga whales. Such a boat is very small at twenty-five feet in length, and they run up to thirty-five feet or more. A typical boat was one we used on our expedition of 1908-12. It was thirty-one feet in length. The cover was made of the skins of seven bearded seals. It would carry in smooth water a cargo of between two and three tons, and it was so light that two of us could carry it overland at a steady walk.

In the early days of Alaska whaling, the whalers used exclusively cedar boats made on the Massachusetts coast, and these continued to be employed in midsummer whaling, where there was little danger of striking ice. But at such icy stations as Point Barrow and Point Hope the white man's boat competed only two or three years with the indigenous Eskimo craft, and was then discarded for ever. The cedar boat is so fragile that if it strikes a piece of ice the size of a bushel basket at six miles an hour it is likely to be stove in. At the same speed, the umiak can be jammed into an ice cake of any size and will remain uninjured, unless there be a rib broken — damage that need not be repaired until the next day. In whaling and walrusing it is frequently necessary to drag a boat over a piece of intervening ice to launch it on the other side. It will take six or eight men to do this for a whaleboat, and with the slightest accident it will be stove in. Two or three men can drag a whaling umiak any old way across rough ice and dump it again into the water without fear of injury.

All these things our men knew quite as well as anyone. But the prices asked for skin boats by the natives at Nome seem to have been higher than they considered equitable, and so they decided to call at East Cape, Siberia, on their way to Wrangel and pick up a skin boat cheaper there.

In an undertaking such as that of Wrangel Island, Eskimos are almost as necessary as boats or weapons. Not that they are wanted for hunting, for almost any white man can soon become as good a hunter as the average Eskimo; neither is their help essential in the building of camps. But their women are needed to sew clothes and keep them in repair. It is the testimony of many experts who have examined

Eskimo sewing that it is unequalled in the world. The manufacturers of boots for hunters that are sold at sportsmen's outfitting shops will make the seam almost any way and then waterproof it by rubbing in grease or some other 'preparation.' The Eskimo woman alone sews a seam that is in itself waterproof. A seamstress not used to white men's ways will become angry if she sees the purchaser greasing the seam of a boot that she has made, for she takes it as a charge of incompetence.

This super-sewing is needed only for skin boats and waterproof sealskin boots. But there is another sewing almost as difficult to acquire and quite as necessary — that of the warm, soft, and pliable skin clothes that keep out the winter cold. It is possible to dress in silk, cotton, or wool, if one wants to follow such methods as have been used in the Antarctic by Scott and Shackleton. But no one will do that if he has the chance of Eskimo clothing, for it is apparently not possible to be thoroughly comfortable at all in the antarctic clothing, and the suits actually used have weighed about double.¹

The best sort of Eskimo suit, complete with outer and inner garments from top to toe, will weigh about ten pounds, where a corresponding antarctic outfit of wool, silk and Burberry goes to twenty or more pounds.

It is impractical under ordinary circumstances to take Eskimos on expeditions otherwise than in entire families. Almost any Eskimo man might be willing to engage himself for a year's job in a mining camp or on a whaling ship, relying, perhaps somewhat reluctantly, upon European or American clothes. But for a residence in an island like Wrangel it would be almost impossible to hire an Eskimo man unless he knew that there would be women as well to do suitable sewing.

¹ For a description of the troubles of polar explorers who did not use Eskimo clothes, or who did not understand how clothes can be kept dry in winter, see Nansen, *Farthest North*, Vol. II, pp. 142, 145-6, and Shackleton, *Heart of the Antarctic*, Vol. I, p. 340. A summary of the difficulties of explorers with their winter clothing and of the modern methods for avoiding them is also found in *The Friendly Arctic*. See index of that book.

With these ideas clearly in mind, the Wrangel party tried to engage at Nome some Eskimo families, and did so actually. But when the time came to sail there arrived at the boat landing only the Eskimo woman, Ada Blackjack, who had been expecting to go as a member of one of the families engaged. When she found that the others had broken their bargain she also wanted to withdraw, but was prevailed upon to go by the assurance that the *Silver Wave* would call in at some Eskimo settlement between Nome and Wrangel to hire families in which she could then take her place. The party made a last effort to get the people previously engaged to stick to their bargain or to engage others, but no one could be found who was willing to go. The season was already later than the best sailing time, and they were afraid to delay. They appear also to have felt certain that they would be able to engage some families of Siberian Eskimos at East Cape when they went in there to buy the skin boat. With that programme they sailed on September the ninth, 1921.

The voyage from Nome to East Cape resembled a voyage in a similar boat from Scotland to Norway. There was no ice in sight. The weather also proved favourable.

At East Cape the party met their first misfortune, and made the most serious error of the whole expedition. The misfortune was that no Eskimos could be engaged. The error of judgment was that when the natives demanded about double the usual price for a umiak the party decided that they ought to refuse to be robbed, and that they could get along all right if Captain Hammer would sell them instead the ship's dory.

Much has been made of this incident since by nearly every critic of the expedition, and far too much, it seems to me. It is true that a departure was being made from the plan which the members and I had formulated together, and in which they believed as thoroughly as I. But, if properly understood, the interpretation is not straight out one of bad judgment, but rather of excessive confidence in the resources of the Arctic. Knight knew how to hunt walrus; every one does, for they are among the easiest animals in the world to hunt.

But Knight had lived by hunting for several years in a region where walrus are entirely absent, and where having a boat makes no difference on that score. He had often depended on hunting when no boat was available, or at least, when for months at a time a boat, even if it could have been constructed in case of necessity, was never constructed because the necessity did not arise. To a man of such experience the skin boat would seem an almost superfluous precaution. He knew its value, but he thought that it could be safely dispensed with. They could get seals without it, they could get polar bears without it, and they might even get walrus without it, since they could have a wooden boat. So they told the natives they did not care to be overcharged, purchased the ship's dory from Captain Hammer, and sailed on towards Wrangel Island.

Had I known that there was no skin boat on Wrangel Island I should have worried more than I did over the safety of the party there during the next two years. But my only information was a sentence which I here quote from Crawford's letter to me dated at Wrangel Island, September 15th, 1921: 'Left Nome September 9th. Called East Cape, Siberia, to purchase skin boat. Sighted (Wrangel) island noon yesterday.' This I took to indicate that our plans in respect to the umiak had been carried out.

We know now that the 'skin boat' here referred to by Crawford was a small one, and that it was swept overboard in a storm and lost on the way to Wrangel Island.

Captain Hammer and his crew knew, of course, that a dory had been substituted for the umiak, but they seem to have considered that there was no particular reason for transmitting that information to me, and they never did.

A careful reading of all the Wrangel documents shows that the absence of the skin boat, while serious, had no immediate bearing on the final tragedy, for it was only an error in the early newspaper reports which gave the impression that the last fatal journey had been undertaken because of scarcity of food, and, therefore, indirectly because of the lack of a skin boat.

At the date when the *Silver Wave* sailed, it would not have been surprising to meet ice between Siberia and Wrangel Island. Some years it is even difficult to get to the Island at all. But in this case no ice was sighted. On September 14th the heights of Wrangel could be seen at an estimated distance of thirty or forty miles. That night they were hidden by fog, but next morning they came to view again, and by afternoon a landing had been made at a point which was not then recognized for certain, but which proved to be near the middle of the south coast, a little east of Doubtful Harbour.

On September 14th Knight wrote that the team of seven fine Nome dogs were 'in rather poor shape, but will do my best to get them in good condition when we reach the island. The season is getting late, and a good many things must be done before the freeze-up, so we are anxious to get started with our work.'

On September 15th Knight wrote: 'We sighted (to-day) a high sandspit with a great deal of wood on it, and landed our outfit in a heavy surf. Everything was landed by ten-thirty P.M. Started unloading at seven P.M.' September 16th: 'After unloading we slept on the ship, but the wind arose from the south, and we were called at three A.M. We had time to get our personal stuff ashore, and the *Silver Wave* departed with three whistles and a great deal of flag dipping, and left us to our own resources. We have a good outfit, and the fox tracks look promising, so we should have a successful winter. The surprising thing to me is the weather, nice gentle winds, with an uncommon amount of sunshine for this time of year, and not an ice cake in sight.'

CHAPTER 8

THE DIFFICULTIES OF 1922

WHEN the *Silver Wave* sailed away 'with much flag dipping,' a silence fell upon Wrangel Island that remained unbroken for two years. Captain Hammer brought out with him only the briefest letters either to me or to friends and families. It had been to each of the four an exciting adventure since they left Seattle, and especially so between Nome and Wrangel. Apart from personal greetings, my only report was a letter from Crawford, which I quote in full: —

Sept. 15th, 1921, 5.30 P.M.

OFF WRANGEL ISLAND.

DEAR MR. STEFANSSON: —

Commencing this letter $\frac{1}{2}$ mi. offshore. Left Nome Sept. 9th. Called East Cape, Siberia, to purchase skin boat. Sighted island noon yesterday. Resembles in outline and colour country round Lewiston, Idaho. Large flat spaces near coast but seems to be mostly hilly. Snow on highest of hills looks like this year's. Have as yet seen not a single ice cake.

6.00 P.M.

Stopped — don't think this is Rodger's Harbour. Maurer is uncertain. Started unloading. Have been very quiet about our business here, since it appears the Russians think they own the island and their Siberian Patrol is liable to pay us an unwelcome visit. Finished unloading eleven P.M., came aboard for meal and wrote till midnight. Up again 2.45 breakfast, then ashore, and raised flag and issued proclamation of which I enclose two copies. Next year bring a phonograph and records as we had no time to get one. Mr. Anderson has copies of grocery and hardware bill, so you can see what we lack. At present we are one mi. west Rodger's Harbour. Fox and bear tracks abundant. Also bring Literary Digest, assay outfit and explanatory books — may be placer gold. We have Eskimo woman, Ada Blackjack,



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT, CRAWFORD, MAURER AND KNIGHT. PICTURE TAKEN IN SEATTLE JUST BEFORE PARTY SAILED FOR NOME.

A PROCLAMATION

KNOW ALL BY THESE PRESENTS;

That I, Allan Rudyard Crawford, a native of CANADA and a British subject and those men whose names appear below, members of the Wrangel Island Detachment of the Stefansson Arctic Expedition of 1921-, on the advice and council of Vilhjalmur Stefansson, a British subject, have this day, in consideration of lapses of foreign claims and the occupancy from March 12th 1914 to September 7th 1914 of this island by the survivors of the brigantine Karluk, Captain R.A. Bartlett commanding, the property of the Government of CANADA chartered to operate in the Canadian Arctic Expedition of 1913-1918 of which survivors Chief Engineer Munro, a native of SCOTLAND and a British subject, raised the Canadian flag, raised the British flag and declared this land known as WRANGEL Island to be the just possession of His Majesty GEORGE, King of GREAT BRITAIN and IRELAND and the Dominions beyond the Seas, Emperor of INDIA, etc., and a part of the BRITISH EMPIRE.

Signed and deposited in this monument this sixteenth day of September in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and twenty one.

Allan R. Crawford.....Commander
E. Loren Wright.....Second in command.
Th. Maurer.....
Milton Ball.....

WRANGEL ISLAND, Sept. 16th, 1921.

GOD SAVE THE KING

with us to sew. Lots of grazing for reindeer. Every one seems contented. Best of luck on European trip. Call on my people if in Toronto.

(Signed) ALLAN R. CRAWFORD

Although this letter was brief, it was satisfactory. In a way its brevity was one of the most satisfactory things about it, for if there had been any feeling of inadequacy of outfit or bad prospects in any respect, the letter would have been lengthened to include them.

But, although nothing had occurred so far to worry the Wrangel party or me, something had occurred which appears to have greatly worried Captain Hammer and his men. The main purpose of our expedition was to continue the occupation of Wrangel Island, begun in 1914 on behalf of the British Empire, against the time when commercial developments (transarctic flying, northern reindeer ranching, etc.) should make it valuable. It is possible that the party did not fully realize that the legal effectiveness of the occupation would depend on the duration and character of the occupation itself rather than upon any assertions or proclamations. But they were exuberant over an accomplished success, for there they were, obviously ahead of any Japanese or other occupation, and clearly the only landing-party since our men had left there in 1914. Apparently the first thing they did was to scramble up a hill-side, erect a flagpole, hoist the Union Jack, and read ceremonially a proclamation, of which a photograph is reproduced herewith.

When the proclamation got to me through the mails several weeks later I took it as a rather inconsequential detail of a successful enterprise. But it had started a ferment in Alaska which was to bring significant developments. Until the flag-raising, it does not seem to have occurred to the crew of the *Silver Wave* that there were any motives other than fur trapping or gold prospecting. Apparently also they felt that the hoisting of a flag had a magic effect, suddenly changing or establishing sovereignty — the much more important landing of an outfit a few hours earlier appears to have had no

such meaning in their eyes. On the voyage back to Alaska they worried a good deal, probably not so much for the fate of Wrangel Island in itself as for their own share in the enterprise, wondering whether their fellow Alaskans might not consider them renegades, since they had indubitably, if unwittingly, taken part in such momentous doings.

I should judge that when the party landed in Nome the more important citizens of that city took the flag story rather calmly, realizing that the hoisting of the Union Jack did not do much to add to or detract from the general effect of all the other things that had been done by our expeditions between 1914 and 1921. But the incident was enough for a journalist with a keen news sense, and the *Nome Nugget* printed a long 'story' under a 'scare headline.' The gist of it was that here had been this valuable island lying right under the nose of Alaskans these many years, and now some Britishers had come and run off with it. Apparently no one in Nome had, up to that time, thought much about the ownership of the island, but now it seemed clear to a good many that it was an obvious and logical part of the territory of Alaska. The legend even grew up that it had been included in the Alaska purchase. Alaskans and other Americans had frequently seen it (this was true, for especially in the whaling days several ships used to sight Wrangel Island practically every year). After the subject had been discussed long enough around Nome, the theory developed that it had been deceitful of us, and even an international 'unfriendly act,' to outfit in an American port with the support of Americans when the design was to get hold of an island which either was or ought to have been American property.

As said, the substantial leading people of Alaska probably took little more than casual notice of these discussions. However, it appears that the talk crystallized into some sort of protest which was eventually sent by Alaskans to Washington.

One of Captain Hammer's assistants on the *Silver Wave* was August Soderholm, now master of the schooner *Nokatak*, plying in Alaskan waters for the Lomen Reindeer and Trad-

ing Corporation. He had been so much taken with Wrangel Island that he tried hard on his return to Nome to organize a party to charter a ship and go there to establish a chain of fur trappers around the island. Patriotism may have played a part (to make the occupation of the island jointly American and British), but adventure and commercial motives were doubtless uppermost. He was unable to muster a party, because the season was so late, it being the last week of September, that the consensus of sailor opinion at Nome was against the voyage as unsafe because of the nearness of winter. This in spite of Soderholm's strong urging that they had just returned from Wrangel without seeing snow except on the distant interior mountains, and without seeing a cake of ice at sea.

*

After the landing of the party in Wrangel Island and the safe return of the *Silver Wave* to Nome I saw no cause for doing anything special for some months. There was an election on in Canada, and there was no point in trying to urge the Government to action until we knew who would be the Government next summer when the supply ship for Wrangel Island would have to sail. I felt sure of the safety and comfort of the party. My stock reply to constant inquiries was that they were as safe and comfortable as a party equally isolated on a tropical island such as Robinson Crusoe's. They were doing the sort of thing that I had dreamed about doing from childhood, which they had always wanted to do, and which at least one healthy young man in every five in Europe or America would dearly love to have the chance to do.

And if I was not worrying about the situation up there, neither was I worrying about any more southerly aspect of it, when one day a newspaper friend told me that a 'big story' about Wrangel Island was about to 'break,' and gave me the chance of publishing my version before another, probably more inaccurate, should come from Washington. The *New York Times* had found out about the protest from

Alaska to Washington, and had realized the news value of it, but was anxious to have not merely some story, but the accurate facts.

Up to this time I had been much pleased with the absence of interest in the Wrangel Island undertaking. It was supposed that I had an ordinary trading venture 'somewhere up North.' The news aspect was changed when it became known that I was doing something that, for the time being at least, I was very reluctant to advertise. It was great luck for me that I had a friend on the *New York Times*, and that, in consequence, the first big 'story' about Wrangel Island that appeared was printed in its issue for March 20th, 1922, substantially as I gave it out.

With the exception of two or three slips, the *Times'* account was such as anyone might condense from a frank and full book telling our ideas, doings, and hopes. Although I had been avoiding publicity, I felt, after seeing the *Times'* article, that no harm had been done, and possibly some good. But I felt entirely different after I had seen the 're-writes' of the story by the more sensational papers, and especially by the Anglophobe section of the Press. These papers used such real facts as suited them from the original story, added such alleged facts as brought out the meaning they wanted, and worded both the news and the editorial comment so as to raise the question as to whether Americans should tolerate having a British subject resident in the United States organizing expeditions to deprive the United States of an island which belonged to them by the combined logic of history and geographical position. Of course, they begged three questions: first, whether the United States had adequate legal claim to the island; second, whether the United States wished to press such claims if they had them; and third, whether it might not possibly suit the United States better to have the island in British possession rather than in the possession of Russia or Japan.

But more disturbing than the doings of the Anglophobe American Press was the response in the Press of Great Britain and Canada. With conspicuous exceptions, the

general trend of the Canadian editorials was to the effect that no one, unless he were crazy, would imagine that so remote an island had any value. This was usually followed by saying that Canada had any amount of undeveloped territory, and that all her energies must be concentrated on developing the lands nearer home before attention could be paid to remote arctic islands. To a connoisseur in history-repeating-itself it is delectable to find that these editorials read as if they had come out of the same editorial storm that burst upon Secretary Seward fifty-four years earlier, when he purchased Alaska on behalf of the United States — in the days when Alaska went popularly under the names of 'Seward's Ice Box' and 'Seward's Folly.'

In the United Kingdom the editorials were equally condemnatory of our action, but on a different basis. In substance they said that, while the value of Wrangel Island was problematic, and in the distant future, the value of the friendship of the United States was unquestioned and imperatively needed by the British Empire at this very moment. They pointed out the consequent folly of doing anything that might possibly irritate the United States. By avoiding carefully the question of whether the United States or Great Britain had the greater legal right, these editorials produced an unpleasant impression new for any large section of the Imperial Press. The Empire has occasionally been accused of swaggering and taking things without even a show of right. There are many recorded occasions when the British Government has insisted with dignity that international questions of importance should be sifted to their bottom and decided on their merits. You would certainly have to go farther back than Elizabeth for historical instances of the surrender by England of valuable territory, to which the right was clear, on the ground that asserting one's rights might hurt the feelings of some other country.

No one would deny the great importance of Anglo-American amity, and certainly the last to do so would have been the Wrangel Island party or myself. They were destined never to know what the papers were saying. But I have

lived in the United States for thirty years, and I have yet to learn any characteristic of the American people which would lead me to think that they would consider it a grievance if the British Empire said to them, 'If there is a question between us as to the ownership of territory, let us discuss it quietly and, if necessary, submit it to impartial outside arbitration.'

A glance at one of the common multi-coloured political maps of the world suggests a good many interesting reflections on what would happen if there really were a principle of international law to the effect that contiguity (or nearness) gives possession rights superior to those of discovery, exploration and occupation. The case of the Falkland Islands is typical. If nearness were the controlling element, they should belong to Argentina; but they happen to belong to the British Empire. They are British through colonization, and the very reason they are important to the Empire is that they are far away from England, and that Argentina does not belong to Great Britain. Their significance is somewhat lessened now by the Suez and Panama Canals but, even so, they are important to the Empire as stepping stones on the way from one possession to another or in their mere relation to international sea-borne commerce. They are in time of peace a part of the commercial sea power of the Empire. We wanted Wrangel Island to remain British as a part of her developing air power for dirigibles and planes to use as schooners and cruisers have used the Falklands.

Certain editors and members of the Canadian Parliament had been arguing ever since my campaign for further arctic exploration had become known, that Canada's chief claim to the ownership of the islands north of Canada was their contiguity either to the Canadian mainland or to islands that were indisputably Canadian through occupation. The reasoning was that some of the islands had been discovered or explored by Norwegians or Americans, and that these nations might claim them as against Canada, if Canada or Britain were to claim, on grounds of discovery, exploration, or occupation, an island (Wrangel) which was nearer to

Russian than to British lands. These arguments, especially when made as speeches in Parliament, were widely circulated. I did not try to meet them in the Press, but contented myself with emphasizing to the Government their double fallacy.

The first answer to the contiguity argument was that in most of the territorial disputes between nations that have been arbitrated in modern times, contiguity has been urged as a claim by one of the contending parties, but has never been given weight by the arbitrators. It was, therefore, no more than a pious hope on the part of Canadians that their surrender of discovery and occupation rights in Wrangel Island to Russia would induce other nations to surrender their discovery or exploration rights in certain other islands to Canada, thus establishing a wholly new principle in international law—the revolutionary doctrine that contiguity should rank above discovery, exploration, and occupation.

The second answer to the contiguity fallacy is, to a Canadian, more striking than the first. One of the islands Canadians want to hold is Ellesmere. Like Wrangel, it was discovered by British naval officers; like Wrangel, it was explored by Americans (but also by Norwegians and British); Canada had made several announcements of her desire to own it, as compared with Russia's one announcement (in 1916) that she wanted to own Wrangel. So far the situations were almost parallel. But the United States Government (the Army) had published a map which I was able to show to the Minister of the Interior which, by its colour scheme, designated as the property of no country not only Ellesmere Island, but the next island south of it, North Devon. And the Danish Government had just notified the Canadian Government that the Danes did not consider that the Canadian law against the killing of ovibos (musk oxen) applied in Ellesmere Island since it was not a part of Canada. I pointed out that if Canada, through Wrangel Island or in any other way, committed herself to the doctrine that the claims of territorial contiguity are superior to those of discovery and occupation, they would lose Ellesmere to Denmark, if the Danes cared to claim it. For Ellesmere Island is only ten

miles from that part of Greenland which was made indisputably Danish by the St. Thomas purchase agreement between the United States and Denmark, wherein the United States renounced to the Danes discovery claims to North-west Greenland based on the explorations of Kane, Hayes, Hall, Greely, Peary, and other Americans.

If we argue that Wrangel belongs to the Russians, who had never even seen it before 1911, just because it is only a hundred miles from Russian territory, then surely Ellesmere would belong to the Danes because it is only ten miles from Danish territory. The only way to hold Ellesmere Island was for the Canadian Government to ignore the arguments of their orators and editors about contiguity giving ownership, and to plant settlements on Ellesmere Island quickly, standing thereafter squarely upon the long-undisputed principle of international law that effective occupation (especially when strengthened by original discovery) gives ownership. I stated this frequently, both in conversations and in writing, to the Canadian Cabinet, and so did several others of whom I know. Doubtless the Government would have seen the point without our urging. What matters is that they did see the point and quietly outfitted a ship, the *Arctic*, to plant Royal Canadian Mounted Police posts on Ellesmere in 1921. That committed the Government of Canada to the principle that occupation and not contiguity should determine the ownership of Ellesmere Island, and, therefore, of all islands. From that moment it became certain that if they ever renounced Wrangel Island it would not be because of the legal force of its being nearer to Russian territory than to British.

The commotion was not confined to the English-speaking Press. Editorials began to be published in Russia, and news dispatches to circulate to the effect that Russia had 'always' claimed Wrangel Island, that the claim had always been undisputed, and that the Russians were the original discoverers. Most extraordinary of all was the Russian assertion that the discoverer had been Lieutenant Ferdinand Wrangel, who had landed on the island 'between the years

1821 and 1824.' It is interesting to speculate whether these Soviet documents were based on actual Russian ignorance or merely upon their cynical assumption of complete British and American ignorance not only of the history of British and American exploration, but also of the history of Russian exploration and development. I incline to the latter view. Some of the statesmen of the Russian Revolution are qualified to come to a California mining town and teach the gamblers there the meaning of the word 'bluff.' One must say this with admiration for the Russians. Their new politicians usually play their hand for all the cards are really worth, and frequently for more.

Besides the Wrangel Island venture which looked towards the development of transpolar air commerce, I had on hand in 1921 two major projects with regard to the North. I was anxious to get private individuals to realize as soon as possible the great potentialities of the Canadian Arctic as a pasture land for reindeer. In this I had been already measurably successful, for I had induced the Hudson's Bay Company to transport several hundred reindeer from Norway for an experimental ranch in Baffin Island. Like many another pioneer enterprise, this one has suffered through accidents not directly connected with the climate, but due to the human factor. The herds had bad luck the first year, fair the second and third, and we are now waiting with bated breath for the news of the fourth winter. If it is good, a war has been won; if it is bad, a skirmish has gone against us, but other battles and the war itself will be won hereafter. Through the nature of the animals and the country, the reindeer enterprise must some time succeed in arctic Canada.

My second undertaking was to create interest that should eventually lead to the domestication of the ovibos, or musk ox, a project the importance of which is outlined in one of my books, *The Northward Course of Empire*. Besides these I had to earn money not only for a living, but also for paying the gradually accumulating salaries of the Wrangel Island party of five. These things kept me so busy that I had no time to go to Ottawa for a full discussion of the Wrangel

Island situation with the new Liberal Government of the Hon. W. L. Mackenzie King which had replaced the Conservative regime of the Hon. Arthur Meighen, with whom I had previously been dealing.

I was also hampered by a naïve faith in the inevitable triumph of a good cause. It seemed to me the facts were all with us, and that people would eventually take the time to look into them, whereupon they would flock to our side. I thought this especially reasonable in a country like Canada, where within living memory the Prairie Provinces have changed from the supposedly frozen wilderness of fifty years ago to the 'bread basket of the world,' and where the development of Alaska from 'Seward's Ice Box' to an empire of wealth was about as well known as it is in the United States. But I found that both lessons have been lost upon the majority of Canadian editors, and that they seldom analogize from the Manitoba or Alaska of yesterday to the 'Frozen North' in which they believe to-day. There are also those who seem to realize the coming value of the remote north, but who simply have not the imagination to see their own advantage in developments which probably will not yield profits for twenty or thirty years. These people are logical according to their lights in refusing to do anything for posterity on the ground that posterity has never done anything for them.

For years I had been writing long letters to the Prime Ministers of Canada, to the Ministers of the Interior and to other influential people setting forth in what appeared to me conclusive terms the background of our northern work. It was another piece of childlike simplicity to feel that all I had to do now was to refer to this correspondence which the new Government would find in the files of their predecessors, and to rely on their reading it and doing something about it. In a way I knew how busy Cabinet Ministers are, for I have associated with them enough for that; but I somehow looked for an exception in this case.

Eventually, when correspondence failed to get results, I did go to Ottawa. Before my arrival, several types of opposition

had been expressed. The speeches of certain members of Parliament showed that they felt it would make Canada and the Empire seem ridiculous to try to retain, on the basis of its supposed value, an island 'well known' to be undesirably cold and, in consequence, worthless. Other members seemed to have the feeling that if the Government did not advance the money for a relief ship I would find some way of securing it privately. This may have been the chief of the reasons why the Government were so slow to act. Or it may have been only that they were too busy with other things. There probably never was anything to the explanation that has since been advanced – that I had members of the Government so thoroughly converted to looking upon the Arctic as a paradise that they found my appeal for a supply ship in contradiction with what they believed to be my views. There is, of course, always a danger that the convert may develop a faith more passionate than that of the missionary.

But if there was opposition, there was also a good deal of warm support. Sir Edmund Walker, for instance, the President of the Canadian Bank of Commerce, gave us substantial help and used his influence to forward our project in his usual quiet but effective way. He was the only Canadian who gave us money, but there were many others of consequence – members of Parliament, editors and private citizens – who made themselves spokesmen for the Wrangel undertaking.

In the negotiations with the Government, one of the first inquiries of the Minister of the Interior was what financial return I would expect if the Government decided to stand on its legal rights with regard to Wrangel Island. After making it clear that retaining this originally and still British land within the Empire was more important to me than any money that could be involved, I went on to say that I hoped the Government would return without interest, or with bank interest, the money my friends and I had put into the enterprise. In this connection we would want our books carefully audited to make it clear beyond question that we had neither profited nor tried to profit through doing what we thought

foresighted and patriotic. But if the Government preferred, either for economy or to demonstrate the value of the island, we would take a long lease and get our money back by subletting the island to some one of the many arctic commercial companies. I made it very clear that we would much prefer the refund of what we had actually spent, for a lease would expose us to newspaper allegations that we had been working for money all the time. The very papers that were now protesting against the retention of Wrangel Island on the ground that it was worthless, would be the first to accuse us of fattening at the public expense if we were given a lease of it.

When pleading with the Canadian Government the spring of 1922 for help (since my money and borrowing power were exhausted) so that a supply ship could be sent to Wrangel, I had made the alternative proposals that they should send in a ship themselves, give us money to send in a ship, or give us a lease of the island which we could sell or otherwise use to raise money for a ship.

While negotiating with the Government I had been negotiating also by cable with people in Nome and had found available the schooner *Teddy Bear*, whose captain, Joe Bernard, I had known since 1910, when the *Teddy Bear* was the first craft to enter Coronation Gulf from the west since Collinson was there in 1852. Acting through the Lomen Brothers of Nome, I made a bargain with Captain Bernard that he would try his best to reach Wrangel Island, receiving a certain sum if he failed, but three times that amount if he succeeded. The suggestion of trebling the amount had come from me, after Bernard had submitted a tentative minimum figure, for success was worth to us a price immeasurably beyond the reasonable wages of a faithful failure.

One thing I seemed to be unable to make impressive enough at Ottawa was how rapidly the summer was passing and that it was now or never. The friendly attitude of the Prime Minister and the Minister of the Interior, the Hon. Charles Stewart, and his deputy the Hon. W. W. Cory, when coupled with my inability to get action, made me more

and more desperate until I finally appealed for money to a personal friend and secured it on the plea of life and death. I said to him in substance that, while we could assume the safety and comfort of every one on Wrangel Island on the basis of continued good health and absence of any accident, there were dangers of sickness and accident sufficient to warrant my saying that there was a possibility if not a probability that lives might be sacrificed if nothing were done that year. I had not appealed to this friend earlier partly because he was an American citizen and, although I thought him sympathetic to my plans in every way, I did suppose he would have the feeling that there ought to be enough wealth and public spirit in the British Empire to finance so small and altruistic a British enterprise. This same feeling had prevented me from appealing to any of my other American friends. I have been in British service either partly or wholly during the entire time of my polar work, but the rest of my life I have lived in the United States. Most of my best friends are naturally where I have lived, but I could not go to them on the score of national interest. Those in Great Britain or Canada to whom I could appeal on a patriotic basis were in the main strangers to me personally, completely out of touch with the developments I was advocating and unconvinced of their fundamental soundness.

It may seem that Canadians ought to know more than any other people about the remotest parts of Canada. But that is a view not based upon observation. It is a commonplace with travellers that the ignorance about the interior of Africa is nowhere so dense as in the cities along the African coast. If you live in Durban or Cape Town you are tempted to assume that you know Africa because you are an African, and you take no interest in meeting travellers who have been in the interior, or in reading books about their journeys. But if you live in Scotland you are vividly conscious of your lack of knowledge and, if you have an inquiring mind at all, you will grasp every opportunity to converse or read about the interior of Africa. The same is true in Canada where the trains fly like shuttles back and forth across the transconti-

mental railways that follow the southern fringe of the country. Most Canadians who travel in Canada merely attach themselves to these shuttles and dart with them through the industrial cities of the East, the grain fields of the prairies, and through the magnificent forests of British Columbia. They climb into the transcontinental trains expecting to see Canada, and they climb out again a few days later imagining that they know Canada. It is not uncommon to find even these 'travelled' Canadians referring to such places as Edmonton or Cochrane as being in northern Canada. Our Scotsman who depends upon the map knows better. If you try it out it will be your experience as it has been mine, that in corresponding clubs of London and Toronto you will find a far higher average of members with well grounded opinions about the whole of Canada in the English club than you will in the Canadian.

If you remember, then, the principle that ignorance of the land beyond the frontier is always densest on the frontier, you will know the fundamental reason why it is in particular difficult to interest Canadians in an arctic enterprise and why it is in general difficult to get the people of any pioneer country to take an interest in parts of it they have not seen. This explains, at least partly, why it was that British and American capitalists were putting money into the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway at a time when nearly half the people of Canada itself were firmly convinced of the folly of the enterprise and passionately opposed to having anybody try it. It is also a partial explanation of why Canadians of to-day will invest money in cattle ranches in the Argentine rather than reindeer ranches in their own country. It is not wholly because cattle are an ancient domestic animal and reindeer new to west Europeans. It is rather because their frank ignorance of South America has opened Canadians' minds to any information about the Argentine, while their limited knowledge of their own country has prevented them from taking an interest in places not half so far away or half so difficult to reach.

With American money at last available for carrying sup-

plies to a party of British pioneers, I cabled to Nome, closing the bargain with Captain Bernard. The season was already at its most favourable stage. Knowing this, the Captain made the hastiest preparations and set sail on August 20th, 1922.

A vote of three thousand dollars was given me by the Canadian Government before the *Teddy Bear* actually sailed, but not in time to affect the sailing date, which had been determined by the help of my American friend.

The vote was made on the basis of the following written appeal summarizing (though by no means completely) many conversations I had had both with the Minister and Deputy Minister of the Interior:

OTTAWA, *Aug. 8th*, 1922.

DEAR MR. CORY:—

Attached is the brief statement you asked for to be presented to Council on Friday. Please urge upon Council that there are on Wrangel Island four men in Canadian service whose lives are in danger. The arctic summer is nearly over.

Respectfully,

(Signed) V. STEFANSSON

HON. W. W. CORY,

Deputy Minister of the Interior,
Ottawa, Ontario.

STATEMENT REGARDING MEN NOW IN DANGER ON WRANGEL ISLAND

The facts with regard to the Expedition now on Wrangel Island are in the hands of the Prime Minister and the Minister of the Interior. The men went to Wrangel Island to hold it for the Empire and Canada, and I had no other motive in sending them there. I have spent on this enterprise all my own money and all I can borrow. Our claims to the island are clear and we should hold it. But the four men there have now been isolated for one year; they may be ill for all we know. They were confident, as I was, that I could get support to send a ship to them. We could have borrowed money

had we received a lease in time, but this is now probably too late. A ship can be chartered in Nome to take supplies to Wrangel and to bring out such of the men as want to come out – total cost of charter and supplies about five thousand dollars. Can the Government advance this money in some way – details of repayment, etc., to be settled later?

When our men were on Wrangel in 1914 the American Government sent a cutter for them at many times the cost of the present enterprise. These now are our own men – a Canadian expedition engaged in a service for Canada. They have already accomplished their task and now need help.

Our arrangements are all made through the Stefansson Arctic Exploration and Development Company, Credit Foncier Building, Vancouver. Credit should be telegraphed there so arrangements can be made with Nome.

This Company was incorporated for the single purpose of securing Wrangel Island to Canada.

(Signed) V. STEFANSSON

The season of 1922 proved to be particularly icy in the region north and north-west of Bering Straits. Contrary to popular opinion, the amount of ice in a certain part of the polar sea any given summer has no relation to the temperature that summer and depends only on the winds that prevail in the wide region surrounding the area you want to navigate. Generally speaking, there is ice between Wrangel Island and the mainland of Asia when the winds are from the north-east, north or north-west. The favourable winds are from the east, south-east, and south.

Captain Bernard made a faithful attempt. He followed the edge of the ice westward. Sometimes he ventured a little way out into it and was nearly caught, an event to be more carefully guarded against here than in the arctic north and north-west of Europe. If you get your ship fast in the ice of the European arctic you drift south into open water and freedom. If you get fast in the ice to the north of Alaska or eastern Siberia you drift with it to the north-west, being inevitably frozen in and carried north and west unless the



THE MAIN CAMP. TAKEN FROM THE *Silver Wave*.



EARLY SPRING—THE PRAIRIE PARTLY FREE OF SNOW, BUT THE MOUNTAINS THE SAME AS
IN WINTER.



MAURER WATCHING FOR THE SHIP THAT COULD NOT COME, BECAUSE OF THE ICE PACKED AGAINST
THE LAND BY THE WIND, SUMMER OF 1922.

ship is broken and sunk. This has been proved by scores of whaling ships and by De Long's *Jeannette*, Nansen's *Fram*, my own *Karluk*, and more recently by Amundsen's *Maud*.¹

Had the *Teddy Bear* been frozen in, it would have meant not only the loss of the ship, but also that she would have been powerless to help the men on Wrangel Island. No one could be better aware of this than Captain Bernard, and so he was wise in running no risk of being caught. He retreated again and again barely in time and followed along westward until he came to where further progress was impossible because the ice touched the Siberian coast. He climbed high headlands in one or more places and saw the ice lying heavily packed twenty or thirty miles out to sea. There arose later rumours that Bernard could have reached the island had he tried harder. These must have originated among people who did not understand the conditions, and they were eventually completely disproved by the testimony of the Wrangel Island party itself, who watched from the hills of the island the same ice that Captain Bernard saw from the hills of the continent.²

On September 23rd, 1922, Captain Bernard returned to Nome and the Lomen Brothers reported to me by wireless his failure to reach the island. This did not cause me any great worry, for I knew that, barring accident or sickness, the men were safe. The chances of accident were not many for careful men; the chances of good health are nowhere in the world better than in the Arctic. It is, in fact, one of the chief reasons why arctic explorers always go north again. You cannot be unhappy when you are exuberantly healthy. Describe a blizzard vividly and correctly to a man in the south. He will shudder at the thought, pity the poor fellows who have to struggle through such a storm, and will congratulate himself that he is safe from it. But take that same man north and the climate and conditions will change his

¹ Later brief dispatches from the *Maud* seem to indicate she was not carried across the basin, but made to circle in an eddy.

² The text of Captain Bernard's report is printed in the Appendix to this book.

temperament so that the howling of a gale outdoors becomes a challenge with an agreeable thrill and difficult to resist. When you are well dressed and have mastered the technique of northern travel you face exultantly a blizzard which your twin brother in the south would shudder to read about.

Although Bernard had not succeeded, I felt much better because he had been able to try. Had financial difficulties prevented me from sending a ship at all, I should have been worried by my inability to hold up my end of the bargain with the men in the field. There had been the understanding that they would do the actual work of keeping the flag flying while I was to have what they considered the easier if not the pleasanter task of converting those in power to the wisdom of our plans. Had the ocean been clear at Wrangel Island they would have had no theory upon which to explain the absence of a ship except my failure to interest the British public in what we were trying to do for Canada and the Empire, and that would have hurt them who knew so well their own unselfishness and who expected approval so confidently. But Bernard told us that ice had been blocking the way. That made my mind easier, for I knew the party at Wrangel must have seen the same ice and must have placed upon it and not upon me or the public the blame for keeping the ship away. I considered they would, accordingly, face the winter cheerfully, not conscious that what they were doing was being considered by some of their countrymen more foolish and less glorious than they had imagined.

As the winter advanced, my attitude about Wrangel Island remained unchanged except that I began to worry a little that I might receive a wireless message from some place in Siberia. The understanding when the party sailed had been that they would certainly not leave the island by sledge during the winter of 1921-22. There had been the suggestion that they might make a quick trip in March of that year to the Siberian mainland to send out letters and despatches through one of the American or Russian traders, but we had decided against that for two reasons. There was nothing to

gain, and there would be considerable expense. There would not even be any increase of peace of mind to the relatives, for anyone who fears that the journey from Wrangel Island to the mainland may possibly be dangerous will feel no differently about the journey back from the mainland to Wrangel Island. The very men who had come through danger to report their safety might easily be lost on the way back. If the letters taken out were to be of any value in guiding our policy the following summer they would have to be carried by messenger at least seven hundred miles overland from the first trader south of Wrangel into whose hands they were given, and that would be costly out of proportion to anything that we might hope to gain.

I am sure that in all this reasoning I had the complete agreement of the families of Knight and Maurer who had become familiar with polar conditions through several years of association with them when they were home from their arctic journeys. The families of Crawford and Galle I knew were considerably worried.

But while no trip was to be made to the mainland the winter 1921-2, our plans left the matter optional for 1922-3. This was the second year on the island and home-sickness might have developed. Crawford in particular might be anxious to get out so as to continue his university studies. They were to discuss the situation thoroughly on the island and come to an agreement. My general urging had been that even the second winter they should all remain through, waiting for the ship that was practically certain to come the second summer. One year in ten or so may be expected to keep a ship out, but two bad seasons, one following the other, were unlikely. But if it seemed that certain information must be sent to me, or that there were other adequate reasons for leaving the island, then the party might make their own decision. Two of them might then come across to Siberia and might send hired messengers out with mail from there, remaining themselves with some trader south of Wrangel till navigation opened, or returning to the island; or they might make the seven-hundred-mile journey to Bering Straits, as they

thought best. The other two would remain on the island until a ship came in 1923.

The danger of crossing was greater than that of staying on the island but, since all of us considered the journey to the Siberian mainland a comparatively simple one, it is difficult to say now whether we weighed the danger at all in our planning.

Although somewhat difficult and expensive, a journey by our men from Wrangel Island to the outside world could have been undertaken any time between January and April with the purpose of reaching 'civilization' a month or two before the opening of arctic navigation. Doing this might seem advisable to them on the basis of what they knew about conditions on Wrangel Island. Their objectives on the island were two – the continuance of occupation and the gathering of knowledge. The occupation had been accomplished. Knowledge, even when recorded in notebooks and photographs, is the most portable of commodities. They could, therefore, leave the island if they liked.

But a journey from the outside to Wrangel Island similarly undertaken in winter by myself, for instance, would not have been practical. The island could be reached before spring, but a party coming over the ice from Siberia could bring with them no appreciable amount of supplies. The only way in which succour could be brought in winter to a party isolated on Wrangel Island would be by sending in a hunter of greater skill than the ones on the island. But we had no reason to fear that assistance was needed, and no reason to think that the skill of the men already there was inadequate to meet the situation. In consequence I attempted no active undertaking during the winter 1922–3, devoting myself merely to writing and speaking along lines which I thought would eventually bring conviction to the public and the Government, and win from them the sympathy and support we needed.

THE SUMMER OF 1923 AND THE TRAGIC NEWS

WHEN the spring of 1923 approached action became imperative. A telegram to Ottawa brought the assurance that the Prime Minister would see me and that the Cabinet would devote an afternoon to the consideration of any statement I might want to make about the arctic situation in general, Wrangel Island in particular, and the steps which I considered they should take.

The first week of April I had the promised opportunity of stating the case to a Cabinet meeting where all but two or three of the ministers were present. Later the Prime Minister sent for me to give me the substance of the decision.

The Cabinet considered, on the basis of my statement, that the general subject of arctic development was of great importance and that I had made out what appeared to them a good case for the probable future importance of Wrangel Island. While they had always considered that the island was historically and legally a part of the British Empire, they had not come to a conclusion as to whether it was, therefore, legally a part of Canada, nor were they sure that incorporating it into Canada would necessarily be advisable even on the assumption that it was valuable and ought to be retained by the Empire through continued occupation. It seemed to the Cabinet that the question was really an Imperial one and should be settled by London. They wanted to ask me, therefore, whether I was willing to go to England and present the same case in the same way to the British Government. I said I would be glad to do so if the Canadian Government would guarantee me a prompt hearing in London and would ask that the British Government would render a decision as quickly as possible. On that understanding I sailed from Quebec May 15th on the *Empress of Scotland*, arriving in England a week later.

My instructions were to report to the Minister for the Colonies, the Duke of Devonshire. The Colonial Office did not disappoint me in the promptness with which it enabled

me to state my case to the departments most concerned. I had been in my hotel room only an hour when I received a message from the Duke of Devonshire setting the time for an interview with himself and for meetings with several individuals, and with a committee of the Admiralty under the chairmanship of the Hydrographer, Rear-Admiral F. C. Learmonth. Arrangements were later made for meetings with a large committee consisting of members of the Colonial Office, the Foreign Office, the Admiralty, and the Air Ministry under the chairmanship of Sir Cecil Hurst.

Every one in the Government was kind and at first everything seemed to be progressing rapidly and smoothly. On the whole I have never had a pleasanter experience than my summer of dealing with the British Government – cabinet ministers, under-secretaries, admirals and generals, technical experts, officers and civil servants of every rank. Although I came there ostensibly to bring information and recommend action, I learned more than I was able to teach. They were technical experts in the true sense, men of scholarship and wide outlook. To few of them were the subjects I presented new, and in many cases their range of information was wider than mine. There were manuscripts, for instance, in the Admiralty, both maps and journals, which showed the historical case for the British ownership of Wrangel Island to be even stronger than I had realized. They also had records of more American landings than I had known about, making it still more evident that if Great Britain were to withdraw her claims those of the United States would remain strong and clear as compared with the Russian.

Although my original introduction had been to the Colonial Office, it soon became obvious that the subject really belonged to the Foreign Office. Nevertheless, the practical sides of the question came under the Admiralty and the Air Ministry. In that connection I had constant dealings with the then First Lord of the Admiralty, Colonel L. S. Amery, and various of his admirals and captains in an official and semi-official capacity. I always had the feeling that much of what progress I made was due to Colonel Amery's constant

interest and his thorough grasp of the arctic situation both in its economic and political aspects.

I learned from Colonel Amery some of the steps in the development of British territorial policy in the Antarctic in which he had been a prime mover. The glamour of the voyages of Scott, Shackleton, and Mawson had attracted the attention of the Empire to these southern lands, the British ownership of some of which had just been proclaimed. Except for projecting mountain peaks and a rare strip of foreshore, these lands are covered with ice and are therefore less inviting than the ice-free and grass-covered arctic islands. The arctic lands, as we have said elsewhere, are towards the centre of the land masses, and may, therefore, become way stations between them, but a map of the southern hemisphere will show that this is not true of the Antarctic. If you fly from Australia, to South America direct, you will certainly cross the Antarctic, but a dirigible would have to avoid that route even were the climate tropical, for the mountains are among the highest in the world. No other flying route that we can conceive between the countries now populous leads anywhere near the antarctic continent. Yet the British are wise in claiming it, for now is the time to establish title and no man can tell what lands may become valuable in a hundred years.

Although my personal and social contact with the officers of the Navy was uniformly delightful, my frequent meetings with Rear-Admiral J. W. L. McClintock made on me an especially lasting impression in which were blended my liking for himself and my great admiration for his father. I have few heroes; Sir Leopold McClintock is one of the few. His and Parry's are the greatest names that the British Empire has given to arctic history.

But more interesting than any of my summer's experiences were the long talks with Commander J. G. Bower. I had met him first at Washington a year before when he accompanied Lord Balfour in connection with the Conference on the Limitation of Armament. We had been brought together by Sir Robert Borden, the great war Premier of Canada. I had been

discussing with Sir Robert the feasibility of polar exploration by submarine, urging also that a craft which can occasionally dive under the ice is of importance to the maritime commercial development of Canada and of every other country, some or all of whose harbours or coasts are blocked by ice in winter. Bower was with Lord Balfour as submarine expert and was said to have had more experience than any man in the British Navy with the actual operation of submarines under ice during the war, to the north of Europe. Between what I knew of the nature and distribution of arctic ice and what Commander Bower knew about the general capabilities of the submarine and its particular adaptability to ice-covered areas, we were able to arrive jointly at the conclusion that a submarine voyage north from England to the Bering Straits and the Pacific could and would be made whenever the need arose.

Now that I found myself in England, I used the opportunity to visit Commander Bower aboard his ship, the *Cyclops*, and he occasionally called on me when passing through London. We talked about every detail of a trans-arctic journey by submarine, how much it would cost to build a vessel specially adapted to the task, how difficult it would be to remodel the best of the modern submarines, how feasible it might be to propose to the Government that instead of scrapping some sound submarine that was obsolete for war purposes, they should remodel it, replace the torpedo tubes with fuel tanks, and call for volunteers from the submarine service for the first sea voyage north and south between England and Japan. Since I have already dealt with the subject in another book,¹ I shall not repeat here the facts and theories upon which these speculations were based.

I find that submarine men who know nothing about ice usually dismiss the suggestion of under-ice navigation as ridiculous. I have found also that most polar explorers ridicule the suggestion because they have not supplemented their knowledge of ice by a study of the submarine. But among the few who have a knowledge in both fields I think

¹ Pp. 189-99. *The Northward Course of Empire*, New York, 1922, and London, 1923.

there would be fairly unanimous approval of a dialogue which took place at one of our meetings. There were one or two other submarine officers present besides Commander Bower when I asked him which he considered more dangerous and probably more uncomfortable, such voyages as the Norsemen used to make nearly every year from Norway to Greenland during the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries and their occasional voyages to America, or a voyage in an ordinary British submarine from Scapa Flow north and south to Vladivostok. After careful thought and some discussion with his colleagues, Bower replied that in his opinion the transarctic submarine voyage would be far safer, far easier, and far more pleasant. I gathered that Commander Bower and several other submarine men would be as eager for an opportunity to cross the Arctic as John Smith and Sir Humphrey Gilbert were to cross the Atlantic, and that the chances of tragedy would be about the same. John Smith came back, but Sir Humphrey Gilbert was lost.

I am wishing the Americans the best of luck with the proposed *Shenandoah*¹ flight across the Arctic. If the *Shenandoah* does not do it, some other airship will, and it is in keeping with American character to persist until the job is done. But for Bower's sake and the credit of the British Navy, I hope they give him a chance to be the first to cross the Arctic by water and thus to make good the dream of the Elizabethan navigators of a short sea route to Cathay.

With the general ideas behind the Wrangel Island enterprise, it was natural that I should be thrown into a contact with the Air Ministry that was even closer than that with the Admiralty. Here I dealt chiefly with the Secretary of State for Air, Sir Samuel Hoare, and with Major-General Sir Sefton Brancker, the Director of Civil Aviation. Especi-

¹ This was written just after the announcement by the U.S. Secretary of the Navy that the *Shenandoah* would cross the Arctic Sea. This plan was later cancelled, but Nansen has since announced that he will take it up with an airship made in Germany. So our good wishes are extended to him instead. Barring accident, whoever first tries it, with an airship as good as the American *Los Angeles*, or better, will succeed.

ally with General Brancker it turned out that our definite plans and vaguer dreams alike had much in common. I had long been advocating the practicability of carrying by dirigible over the Arctic the important mails that constantly must pass between London and Tokio, and I got so far as to publish this proposal in the *National Geographic Magazine* for August, 1922.¹ About the same time General Brancker had actually been planning with General Maitland a dirigible trip from London to Tokio; but at that time they had been so misinformed about temperatures and other conditions in the Arctic that they had not considered the feasibility of taking this most direct route, and had instead contemplated a flight only a little north of the Trans-Siberian Railway. With that route they found there would be considerable difficulty because high mountain ranges would have to be crossed. They had got so far in their arctic thinking as to say to each other what a pity it was that the Arctic was so prohibitively cold, since the route across it had no mountains, and was also much shorter. But what really stopped this planning was the tragic death of General Maitland in the breaking of airship R38. When I turned up with my gospel of the friendly arctic, insisting that we forget the ancient views of the terrible north inherited from the Greeks and base all our thinking and planning on the actual verified principles of modern meteorology and the reliable observations of travelers, General Brancker resumed his interest in the London-Tokio plans that had been interrupted by General Maitland's death. We went into the question very thoroughly — length of jumps, prevalence of fogs, direction and violence of winds, absence of mountains, advantages and disadvantages of the polar temperatures both in summer and winter. The conclusions were crystallized in a speech made by General Brancker at Sheffield, in which he said that regular mail service by airship between England and Japan over the Arctic was a probability of the next ten years.

During the summer of 1923 I took the time for discussions

¹ See also Chapter VII, "Transpola Commerce by Air," in *The Northward Course of Empire*.

of every arctic problem with whoever would listen, because they had a bearing on creating public interest in the pressing situation of the men on Wrangel Island. I also wrote articles for the *Spectator*, *The Times*, *Manchester Guardian* and *Observer*, for in a democracy it is necessary to convince not only the Government, but also the people who support the Government with their votes and who are likely to register disapproval at the polls if the facts and reasons behind the actions of the Government are not made clear to them.

My intercourse with the Government continued smooth and pleasant, but progress no longer appeared to be rapid. I speak with no authority, but I blamed the delays upon the slowness of diplomatic correspondence, since the Foreign Office doubtless wanted to sound out the various Powers as to their attitude.

The technical advisers of the Foreign Office seemed to be clear as to the superiority of British rights in the case. The Russians did not appear to have any legal claims, but they were making a great deal of fuss – wireless dispatches from Moscow, notes to the Foreign Office, and threats from Vladivostok. The United States had undeniably been the owners of Wrangel Island for a period following their taking possession in 1881, and here was at least a reasonable ground for discussion. American newspapers, doubtless basing their editorials on inaccurate encyclopædias and other books of reference, were asserting that the question was whether the United States should surrender territory, which belonged to them, to the British Empire. Amusingly, the papers in Canada were at the same time discussing the question whether the British Empire should take Russian territory away from Russia, and both parties were talking about Wrangel Island. Most of the Canadian editors evidently based their idea of Russian ownership on the Moscow declarations to that effect, but a few apparently took it from the Mercator's charts on their walls. To one as unlearned in West-European history as these men were in the history of Russia, it might seem reasonable to glance at the map and conclude that England belonged to France.

When you are trying to lead a nation to a change of policy nothing is more important than the attitude of the Press. Through my fortunate and most valuable friendship with Sir Michael Sadler, I got in touch with the London *Times* and the *Manchester Guardian*. For years I had been a great admirer and constant reader of the *Guardian*, and I had in part, therefore, the necessary background for the delightful day I spent with its owner and editor, Mr. C. P. Scott, whose personality intensified the impression which the *Guardian* had made. Since this paper is mainly concerned with social and political movements and with the cause of truth and progress along those lines, it is probable that my visit to Manchester was really important in turning the attention of Mr. Scott and his editors to the study of a geographic field they had not previously cultivated and where their ideas had been only those of the average educated person.

Equally pleasant and profitable were my dealings with the managing director of *The Times*, Sir Campbell Stuart, and its editor, Mr. Geoffrey Dawson. When things became difficult later in the summer the support of *The Times* was invaluable. They would have come out openly sooner except that it seemed to Mr. Dawson that a Press campaign would probably do more harm than good at a stage when the Government appeared to be favourably inclined.

It was perhaps only logical that the British Empire League should be interested in Wrangel Island, but the enthusiastic support of its secretary, Major Evelyn Wrench, went far beyond official routine. One of the most valuable things he did was to bring me in touch with Mr. J. St. Loe Strachey, and Mr. J. B. Atkins of the *Spectator*. It was through the *Spectator* that I was able to publish for the first time in England a comprehensive if brief history of Wrangel Island. Since the *Spectator* is read by so many of the influential people in Great Britain, this really amounted to submitting to the men who controlled the Empire the facts on the basis of which they could make up their minds independently as to whether the issue was an important one and what should be done about it.

There were other journalists who were personally friendly, but were unable to give us any support because of their views on domestic and foreign politics. For instance, Mr. J. L. Garvin, the editor of the *Observer*, appeared to me to believe that the Empire was already too large and that no riches or possible advantages of Wrangel Island would be any argument for retaining it in the Empire. I am still of the opinion that if Mr. Garvin had gone farther into the subject he might have seen that Wrangel Island was an exception to his general rule, even assuming the rule to be valid. Until the Empire is much contracted, it needs half-way stepping-stones in every ocean to connect the various dominions, and Mr. Garvin might have recognized Wrangel as an important way station of the future. However, in practice he observed a benevolent neutrality, and did help a good deal indirectly by publishing articles on transpolar commerce by air, emphasizing the epochal possibilities of the transarctic flight of the United States Navy airship *Shenandoah*, which had just then been announced would be attempted. Anyone who already had Wrangel Island in mind would inevitably see in it added value if he only grasped the general effect of Admiral Moffett's plans.

But I am afraid I did not make full use of my opportunities to influence the Press, for I was so occupied with other things.

I had at first supposed my mission to be to the Colonial Office, and that a decision would soon be arrived at by them. I next learned that the question would have to be decided by the Foreign Office; in another month I was told that it was too important for the Foreign Office, and would go before the Cabinet. My experience with the British Cabinet in 1923 began to be in a sense a repetition of my experience with the Canadian Cabinet in 1922. Every one seemed friendly, but the difficulty was in arriving at a decision. I had been ignorant of the causes of delay at Ottawa, but in London it was impossible not to know and still more impossible not to sympathize. The nation and the Government were facing momentous decisions. At home there was political unrest; abroad there were pressing issues with Russia,

Germany, and France. Even Italy, Turkey, and lesser countries contributed their share of worries. There was unemployment, business was stagnant, and the failures of large commercial concerns were reported in the papers every day, especially from the textile districts.

One would have to be ignorant of the way in which geography affects history not to be profoundly worried by the closing of a textile mill in Lancashire or Yorkshire. Britain is an isolated island, and it is only the enterprise and ambition of her citizens that have enabled her to be the spinning centre of the world. Success in building up these giant industries had been the reward of inventive genius and of a consistent programme of expansion and development carried out a few years sooner than anyone thought of trying similar things in other countries. Not being based upon any geographic condition, except perhaps on the climate of Britain which makes energy and ambition the second nature of anyone who breathes her air, this textile supremacy had to be maintained unbroken. Once let it collapse, and there could be no rising from the ruins.

In the United States the cotton mills are being moved from Massachusetts to the Carolinas, but without any national calamity, for the movement is within the borders of the United States. The capitalists and managers are the same, and even the labourers can move without much inconvenience from their old cottages in New England to new cottages made ready for them in the South by their old employers. But when an English paper reported that simultaneously with the closing of a mill in Lancashire, a new one as large and better equipped had been opened in Czecho-Slovakia, the implication was a wholly different one. I could easily understand that a Government worried with such problems had difficulty in concentrating its attention on arctic developments which even I, their advocate, admitted to be decades in the future. With more than a million unemployed at home receiving doles from the Government to enable them to live, and with famine in neighbouring European countries intimately known to Englishmen through travel and

daily exchange of news, it was difficult to get anyone to concern himself about whether four young men might die on an arctic island in case no ship could be sent to them to end their second year of isolation.

I know there were several members of the Cabinet personally concerned about the Wrangel Island situation, but I suppose it to have been chiefly due to the urging of the heads of the Admiralty and the Air Ministry that the question finally came up. I never received a written communication about what took place at the Cabinet discussion, but I was given to understand that half a dozen or more of the Ministers expressed themselves in sympathy with my views and with the Wrangel Island undertaking, and that no one spoke in dissent. The general sense of the discussion was that the things which I had done and was doing were the very best possible, and that it was desirable to continue the occupation through private effort until the Government had more leisure to consider the case and especially to consult with the Prime Minister of Canada, who was expected to arrive about the end of September to take part in the Imperial Conference of Prime Ministers.

On learning this decision, I said to Colonel Amery that I agreed with it exactly, and that I would never have come to the Governments of either Canada or Great Britain for help if it had not been that the enterprise had proved beyond my financial resources. For a rich man I could conceive of nothing more agreeable than to support such an undertaking as that of Wrangel Island unostentatiously through a period of years against the time when the world should realize his foresight and the great value of it to the public. But I was poor and beyond my depth. I had spent on the organization of the expedition itself all the money I had saved up to that time, and since then its running expenses had absorbed most of what I could earn. I had already borrowed on every security I had, and also from friends without security. Colonel Amery said at once that he understood all this, and that he would do his best to find some private person who had the necessary vision and could afford to finance our work. I have abundant

evidence that he tried hard. He himself and several of his friends eventually subscribed, but the money which actually sent the ship to Wrangel Island came in another way.

No man in England was in such close touch with what I was trying to do as an old friend, Mr. Griffith Brewer. I had not been saying much to him about my worries lately, for I knew his kindness of heart, and feared it would hurt him, to have to remind me that he did not have the money needed for sending the necessary relief ship. But the last week of July he came to me and asked outright whether I did not think that the season was getting dangerously late, and that it was becoming a matter of life and death to send a ship within a week or so. When I agreed and stated further my doubt that I could get any help from the Government quickly enough, Mr. Brewer said he would pledge his property at a bank, and get the necessary money to cable to Alaska immediately as an advance against subscriptions, which he felt sure he could secure if I would authorize him to make a public appeal for funds through *The Times*. I at once consulted the Editor of *The Times*, Mr. Geoffrey Dawson. When I found him willing to carry the appeal, Mr. Brewer arranged for borrowing the money, assuming the risk of getting it returned to him if and when the subscriptions came in. The amount he eventually advanced was about £2,500.

Meantime I had been making certain preparations, banking on the hope that the money would come from somewhere before it was too late. When it came I would charter a ship in Nome. I had been negotiating for that by cable, as last year, through my friends, the Lomen family. I found that there was available the schooner *Donaldson*, owned by an old friend, Alexander Allan. Indeed, Allan had once been connected for a year with one of my expeditions, co-operating with us through the services of the schooner which he then owned, *El Sueno*.¹ Like Captain Bernard the year before, Captain Allan was willing to go for a very reasonable minimum fee in case of failure, with a larger payment if successful.

¹ See index of *The Friendly Arctic* under *Allan, Alexander*.

It is usually possible in Nome to engage any one of ten or twenty men who would be capable of taking charge of such a schooner for a voyage to Wrangel Island. But there was in New York the young man already referred to, Mr. Harold Noice, who had been a member of my 1913-18 expedition. He had now been in 'civilization' over a year. Like most men who have been in the Arctic, he was getting tired of 'civilization,' and for that and other reasons he was anxious to go north. Thinking to give him a chance to do so, and considering him sufficiently qualified by experience, I had spoken to him before I left for England about whether he would like to be in charge of the Wrangel Island ship in case I got the money. He said he would be eager to do this. The understanding was that when he reached Wrangel Island he would discuss the situation with the party of occupation. If all the party wanted to come away, then Mr. Noice would take charge in their place, or if before leaving Alaska, he decided he did not want to stay in Wrangel himself, he was to employ and take with him some one to put in charge. But if one or more of the original party desired to remain, he would bring away the others, leaving on the island, under the command of the senior officer remaining, a small party of Alaska Eskimos which we intended to take in.

In my absence in England, Mr. Taylor arranged to send Mr. Noice north on behalf of our Company. He reached Nome about the middle of July. Up to that time all negotiations had been carried on by cable through Lomen Brothers, but when Mr. Noice arrived they turned everything over to him.

About this time threats from the Soviet Government began to circulate through the newspapers of the world. A dispatch, said to originate in Vladivostok, reported that a Russian 'gunboat' was leaving there for Wrangel Island for the purpose of protecting this 'Russian territory' from 'operations considered hostile to Russian interests.' Another Soviet dispatch, said to come from Anadyr, was not only circulated through the newspapers, but was actually brought to Nome and delivered to Mr. Noice by the United States coastguard vessel *Bear*. This said in substance that if a

supply ship wished to sail to Wrangel Island a wireless message asking permission to do so must be sent to the Soviet Government at Anadyr! This request would be granted on condition that the supply ship would call at East Cape, Siberia, take on board a contingent of Red Guards and carry them to Wrangel Island, where the Red Guards would confiscate all furs and other commercial property of the expedition, but would allow the men on the island as well as the ship to go free! Mr. Noice transmitted this message to me in London. My reply was to the effect that we did not know that the Russian Government had any legal standing in the case, and that the nationality of Wrangel Island would not in any case be determined by the results of any predatory expedition such as the Soviet threatened, but rather according to international law and probably by the decision of some international tribunal or committee of arbitration. Mr. Noice was, therefore, to make no reply to the Russian message, and was to ignore it except as a hint to shape the course of the ship so as to avoid calling at any Siberian port. This was logical in any case, for, according to my view, the best route was to follow the American coast to Point Hope, and strike thence directly for Wrangel, leaving the Russian coast far below the horizon to the left.

After rapid and energetic preparations, Mr. Noice sailed from Nome in the *Donaldson* August 3rd. His crew was not complete. He wanted especially to get some Eskimo families with dogs and sledges. It was possible that the direct sea route would be open, and that the *Donaldson* would reach Wrangel Island in less than two weeks. But it was also possible that ice might bar the way to the *Donaldson*, as it had to the *Teddy Bear* the previous season. In that case the plan was to winter as near Wrangel Island as possible, crossing by sledge in the winter to see how the situation was on the island and to help if necessary. As we have pointed out, the only help that can be carried to Wrangel Island in winter is the assistance of competent hunters, who can secure food after they reach the island.

A third possibility was that the sea would be open until

within a few miles of the island, but the coast itself barred. In that case experienced men, either whites or Eskimos, could cross from the ship to the shore, carrying with them a umiak which they would haul over the floes and launch in the water patches between.

The money Mr. Noice was working with was partly a loan from Mr. Griffith Brewer made to forestall, if possible, loss of life on Wrangel Island, and partly contributions secured through the campaign in *The Times*. I did not feel able to authorize the employment of expensive men or the purchase of costly supplies to carry on the work of occupation. But it seemed that the supplies which had to be taken to use in case of an enforced wintering by the *Donaldson* and the people who had to be carried to make such a wintering safe and successful, would be adequate equipment and personnel to carry on the Wrangel work for another year or two in case they could be delivered to the island by direct ocean voyage. In other words, since these people and supplies had to be paid for, they might as well be used to continue the occupation if Mr. Noice could land them there the summer of 1923. I accordingly gave him instructions to that effect — the plans to be made were rescue plans, but they were to be converted into plans of continued occupation if and when the rescue proved successful.

A few days before the *Donaldson* sailed Mr. Brewer had published his plea for funds in the form of a letter printed in *The Times*.

TO THE EDITOR OF 'THE TIMES.'

SIR, —

Most readers of *The Times* will know of Vilhjalmur Stefansson's disinterested enterprise in sending Mr. Crawford and three other white men with some Eskimos to Wrangel Island, to hold possession until the British Government shall decide whether this island (discovered by an officer of the British Royal Navy, and not by a Russian, as some have assumed) shall be retained as a part of the Empire. These adventurous patriots have now been marooned in the Arctic

THE ADVENTURE OF WRANGEL ISLAND

for two years (for reasons that have been explained in the Press from time to time). They have not had a word from the outside world for two years, nor have we heard a word from them. Their supplies must have given out last year, and they have since been dependent on hunting for food – an eventuality for which they were prepared, for two of them are veterans of Stefansson's former expeditions, and used to living in the Arctic by forage. Nevertheless, their condition may by now be desperate.

Mr. Stefansson has spent on the Wrangel Island Expedition all the earnings from his books, magazine articles, and American lectures, and it is now beyond his power to find the costs of a relief ship to go to Wrangel Island this summer. Rather than see these gallant men deserted on the island during the coming winter, the British Wright Company two weeks ago voted the sum of \$2,500 to pay for an auxiliary schooner to visit Wrangel Island from Nome, Alaska. A cable now received tells me of the schooner which first offered to go to the relief having accepted another charter,¹ and that an additional sum of \$10,000 must be deposited in the bank at Nome to safeguard the crew of the only other vessel now available in the event of the ship being frozen in.² This sum, to be of use, must be found immediately.

¹ Mr. Brewer based this statement on a cable from Harold Noice dated Nome, Alaska, July 17th. The pertinent part of the cable reads: 'Allan charter failed stop must charter only other suitable vessel and secure own crew stop cable seven thousand dollars for repairs charter provisions wages crew fuel oil.' That cable, however, was immediately followed by others – each of which put the money figure higher. On July 27th, for instance, we had: 'Must have total security twelve thousand six hundred dollars,' and so on for larger amounts. This was especially bewildering to us since we had commenced our negotiations upon the basis of the following cable:

VILHJALMUR STEFANSSON,
New York, N.Y.

NOME, ALASKA, *June 29th, 1923.*

Can secure boat for Wrangel satisfactory terms believe should leave here about August first Alex Allan here with new good boat seventy tons nine knots believe can arrange thousand dollars trip two thousand if successful.

(Signed) CARL J. LOMEN

² The cabled information proved incorrect as to these being different boats; we learned later that this was a raised price for the same boat.

Is it possible to find some reader or readers of *The Times* to add the sum of £2,250 to the £550 already subscribed by my company? My directors have no financial interest in this adventure, but they are anxious that these lonely men should not be put to that supreme test which Franklin and his men failed to meet and live. These men are as isolated as Shackleton's men, who were taken off Elephant Island, when the British, in spite of the stress of war, spared a ship to go to their rescue.

With reference to the dispatch, which appeared in *The Times* to-day, I do not think that the Soviet Government would seriously attempt to interfere with the relief ship, seeing that it is merely going on an errand of humanity, and the question of whether or not it succeeds in bringing the men back from Wrangel Island can have no bearing on the ultimate nationality of the island.

Subscriptions for the Wrangel Island Relief Expedition may be sent to Griffith Brewer, 33, Chancery-lane, W.C.2. Should more than is required for the relief expedition be subscribed, the balance will, on the return of the ship, be distributed *pro rata* amongst all the subscribers.

Your obedient servant,

GRIFFITH BREWER, *Managing Director*
of the *British Wright Company,*
Limited.

33, Chancery-lane, W.C.2.

August 1st, 1923.

The day after Mr. Brewer's letter appeared, several people said to me that we were not using the best means for securing funds. The world in general and the British nation in particular look upon the Arctic as a very terrible place, and upon every one who goes there as almost necessarily a hero. My friends said that a plea, in order to be successful, should refer to the glorious traditions of British exploration, to the heroism and self-sacrifice of the men on the island, and to the equal heroism of the men who were now sailing for their rescue. We had always seen the force of the argument, but

we had never felt we could honestly use it. First there was general objection to that type of sensationalism. But beyond that I had to consider both my colleagues on the island and the cause they were trying to serve. When they sailed north two years before I did not look upon them as heroes, and neither did they look so upon themselves. I had found myself in complete agreement with the two veterans, Knight and Maurer, on every point and upon no issue more clearly than our common detestation of popular heroics and our desire to avoid every semblance of them. They in going and I in helping them to go had two main motives. We wanted to do a definite piece of work at Wrangel Island, and we wanted in general to help in the struggle to get the public to be as rational about the polar regions as they usually are about other countries. A sensational plea might have brought in money rapidly, but only at the expense of weakening the cause for which the men on Wrangel Island and I at home were equally working.

The subscriptions eventually amounted to nearly £1,800, and there were among the subscribers some of the most distinguished names of England.¹ I was especially proud of an unsolicited contribution from Lord Milner, for he had been Secretary for the Colonies and was recognized as one of the soundest planners and workers for the welfare and stability of the British Empire. The most touching contribution was from Italy sent by Miss M. F. Gell, granddaughter of Sir John Franklin, whose tragic death, as we have shown previously, had been at once the ending of the romantic three-hundred-year period, during which men had visualized the Arctic as a way to the Indies, and the beginning of the seventy-five-year period which has pictured the Arctic as an icy desolation and a hopeless barrier across the short route to the East.

September 1st brought unbelievable news from Wrangel Island. The *Donaldson* had returned to Nome and reported that Crawford, Galle and Maurer had died on the ice between

¹ See list of subscribers in Appendix.

Wrangel and Siberia, and that Knight had died on the island, leaving the Eskimo woman as the only survivor.

When a company of soldiers is mowed down in an heroic charge, the public thinks first whether the stronghold was captured. They forget the cost in the glamour of success, or emphasize it in the bitterness of defeat. But with mothers and fathers and friends the shock of grief and sense of personal loss are felt even before the news is clearly understood. It seemed to me at first as if I had lost at one blow four dear friends and a cherished cause. But in a little I came to see that even so terrible a tragedy could not lose us more than one of our two objectives.

The men who were dead had been fighting for two things, their faith in the coming development of arctic lands and their hope that the English-speaking countries might become leaders in that development and chief gainers by it. This tragedy, if temporarily misunderstood by our people, as I feared it might be, would tend to check the interest of our countries and hamper their enterprise. But it might, and probably would, have an opposite effect upon Russia and perhaps Japan. The development of the arctic lands might then come no less quickly than we had expected, though the beneficiaries of it would be others than we had hoped.

From the first presentation of the news it seemed to the public as if not only the men were lost, but also the cause for which they had died. They had gone north to carry out an enterprise and to work out a theory. The enterprise had been carried out, but the value of it would disappear if the theory upon which it was based were proved to be wrong. The original newspaper dispatch seemed to show that, instead of the Arctic being well supplied with game, as it had to be according to our theories, it was in reality the barren wilderness of ancient belief. But in order to accept the conclusions which the newspapers began to extract editorially from Mr. Noice's dispatches, I had to discard not only my own experience of eleven years in the Arctic, but also Maurer's experience of six months on Wrangel Island itself in 1914 and the reports sent back by Crawford's party with the captain of

the *Silver Wave* in 1921 telling that game conditions seemed even better than we had expected. I could not accept such a conclusion, and so I believed only part of the cables. But most of the public naturally took the whole of them at face value.

The cables gave, as the solution of the tragedy, starvation due to lack of game. But I knew this could not be true, and I believed the cable sent to London had been edited in New York and amplified from Mr. Noice's original Nome dispatch. I proved wrong in that surmise. The real source of error involved conditions more serious and painful than I at first had any ground for suspecting. That will appear in the next chapter.

A few days after the news story to the Press I received a personal cable from Mr. Noice, which showed that my original interpretation had been at least partly right.

'NOME, ALASKA, *Aug. 31st-Sept. 4th*, 1923.

'Arrival last night Wednesday Blackjack only survivor stop buried Knight August twentieth stop Crawford Galle Maurer left Wrangel January twenty-eighth nineteen twenty-three stop believe entire party perished you notify relatives of boys as you think best stop have left colony of two Eskimo families two unmarried Eskimo men in charge of Wells stop equipped party for two years' sojourn stop game conditions Wrangel apparently excellent stop failure of last expedition due to combination poor equipment and inexperience.'

The reader already knows, as I did when I received it, that this message gives in part a wrong impression; as, for instance, where it implies that Knight and Maurer were inexperienced, although they were in fact among the most experienced explorers that ever went into the Arctic.



A CLUSTER OF FLOWERS, SUMMER 1922.



EIDER DUCK ON WRANGEL ISLAND, SPRING OF 1922.



MILTON GALLE, SUMMER 1922.



THIS TYPE OF SHELTER AGAINST WIND AND SUN WAS USED ON THE SUMMER RECONNOITRING TRIPS.

CHAPTER 10
EXPLANATION AND APOLOGY OF
MR. HAROLD NOICE

THE original Press dispatches of Mr. Noice from Nome, Alaska, and his later amplified narrative composed in New York and sent out over his signature, were printed by some of the best and most reliable newspapers everywhere, and must, therefore, have produced some impression in every country. But the many points on which the dispatches contradicted themselves and were otherwise unreasonable, were from the first more noticed and commented on in Europe than in Canada or the United States. In the Canadian and American editions of this book we have, therefore, thought it necessary to refute in detail both those statements of Mr. Noice that were inaccurate as to natural conditions and those in which he criticizes unkindly and unjustly the party on Wrangel Island.

But these refutations, conclusive and easy though they are, since the evidence is abundant and clear, have a tendency to change into an argument a book that should be a simple narrative following closely the documents in the case. This is, for many reasons, unpleasant, and we are taking grateful advantage of the original scepticism with which the Press stories were met in Europe, to shift wholly into the appendices of the English and other European editions those parts of the Canadian and American editions that would never have been in them but for the incorrect newspaper reports which were there so widely believed.¹

As originally written, this chapter explained how it came about that Mr. Noice got into temporary possession of all the Wrangel Island documents, and was able to withhold them from the relatives and from all others concerned until after his version of what had happened at Wrangel Island had been published, thus preventing them from effectively

¹ This refers to Appendices IV and V, which we do not dare to omit (lest our motives for omitting them from the European editions be misconstrued).

contradicting him at the time even on points where they knew he was farthest from the truth. Having explained this, the manuscript then went on to a detailed disproof of his more important errors of fact and interpretation, and exposed, to a certain extent, Mr. Noice's motives.

At this stage, Mr. Noice and his lawyer came to us to offer a retraction for us to publish in this book, partly in return for the omission from the book of certain evidence and charges against Mr. Noice. They stated they wished to give as explanation of his errors, (1) that Mr. Noice had not himself written the story published in the newspapers over his signature, (2) that when he sanctioned its publication he had not as yet read carefully enough the expedition documents, and did not realize the discrepancies between what he said they contained, and what they did contain, and (3) that he was at the time in a temporarily abnormal nervous condition.

We finally agreed on the following explanation and apology which Mr. Noice offered and signed on the advice of his lawyer.

NEW YORK, *October 19th, 1924.*

MR. VILHJALMUR STEFANSSON,
Broadway at 156th Street,
New York, N.Y.

SIR, —

On my return last week from Brazil, where I have spent six months, mainly in recuperating after a very severe attack of nervous prostration, I re-read the documents of the Wrangel Island Expedition with the exception of Milton Galle's diary; and I have also re-read the stories which appeared in the newspapers over my signature. I am glad to take this opportunity of correcting some misjudgments. Having spent a number of years in the Arctic, and loving the Arctic and believing in it as an habitable place, I wanted to show that Wrangel Island was valuable, a very good game country, a desirable place to live, as we Northerners judge places. But the general effect of my stories as published in the newspapers seems to lose that idea in some sensational writing

which over-emphasizes the 'hardships' and drawbacks of the North.

Those stories were given out verbally in interviews (not written) by me at a time when I was in a serious nervous condition. They were based on a hasty reading of the documents. When I went to Nome the summer of 1923, I was but recently out of the hospital, where I had undergone a serious operation. The nervous strain of organizing and outfitting the relief expedition, the oppositions put in my way in Alaska, the Soviet threats, plus the task of manœuvering the *Donaldson* through the ice to Wrangel, and, most of all, the terrible shock of the tragedy I found on the island, all these were undoubtedly responsible for certain incorrect impressions which unfortunately passed on into print. The false impression of Wrangel (or any part of the North that I know) given in my newspaper stories is offset by my own book, *With Stefansson in the Arctic* (Dodd, Mead, New York, and George G. Harrap, London), which I originally thought of calling 'A Polar Picnic.'

Though I actually wrote none of the newspaper stories, I am responsible for them. I find that I used the words 'youth and inexperience' several times, although Maurer and Knight were twenty-eight and twenty-nine years old when they started on the Wrangel Island expedition, and were experienced men in the north. It was only the other two, Crawford and Galle, who were having their first look at the Arctic.

As published, my newspaper stories gave the impression that the fatal journey away from Wrangel Island was made under pressure of food scarcity, that the purpose of the journey was to bring back succour, that the men and dogs were weak from hunger, and that the undertaking was of such a nature that there was small chance of a safe journey to Siberia. This was not the fact. Knight and Crawford planned the first journey, and the date for it was set several months before when no approaching food shortage was contemplated, and it was actually undertaken later at about the time set. Probably they would have made the attempt at

about the same time of year and with about the same prospects of success if there had been the largest quantity of food on hand. After the return of Knight and Crawford the fact that food had begun to run low, although there was a considerable supply still on hand, was one reason why the plan for a journey to Nome via Siberia was not abandoned. The principal lack was fresh meat.

I did not intend to give the impression that the death of the three men, Crawford, Galle and Maurer, was probably a slow one from freezing brought on through weakening by starvation. It is much more likely and almost certain that the death did take place suddenly in one of two ways – either by the party getting in the poor light on unsafely thin ice, and being drowned by breaking through, or else by the breaking up of the ice upon which they were camped in a gale, perhaps in the darkness of night.

The general impression given by my news story now appears to me unduly critical. I did and I do want to do justice to these brave men while analysing the causes of their tragedy.

My complete breakdown followed soon after the publication of the original long and detailed newspaper story, and its approach must have been the cause of what I later printed and which I was then convinced I was justified [in] by Knight's and Ada Blackjack's diaries. I sincerely regret that any false impressions have been given and humbly apologize for my errors.

(Signed) HAROLD NOICE

NEW YORK, *October 19th*, 1924.

To us, the important parts of Mr. Noice's statement were two:

(1) The explanation that his original misstatements and misinterpretations had been due to a (temporary) abnormal nervous condition. With this admitted, we did not think it necessary to press Mr. Noice for detailed retractions of the many things in his articles which we consider just as incorrect as the ones he withdraws.

(2) In addition, we desired, however, that he should specifically withdraw the central contention of his newspaper articles, to which he had kept returning again and again in his explanations and interpretations of either what had happened or what he alleged had happened. This desire Mr. Noice met to our satisfaction with the paragraph (above) beginning: 'As published, my newspaper stories gave the impression. . .'

We pass now to the simple narrative of what happened, basing it on all the information and documents we now have — the correspondence of members of the expedition with me and with their friends and families, a few scattered papers written by Milton Galle found on Wrangel Island, the fragment of a diary kept by Ada Blackjack, verbal information given by Ada Blackjack to me when I talked with her in Seattle in January, 1924, letters from friends of Ada Blackjack's in Seattle and Alaska to whom she had given information which they conveyed to me, a statement made by Ada Blackjack to E. R. Jordan, now resident in Seattle, but formerly of Nome, the man who engaged her to accompany the Wrangel Island expedition. But chiefly the story is based upon the two-volume diary of Lorne Knight.

THE FIRST AUTUMN ON WRANGEL ISLAND

THE diary of Lorne Knight is the chief document on which is based the story of the first two years of the second Wrangel Island occupation. The entries themselves are fragmentary, and it is necessary to read a good deal between the lines if we are to form a continuous and vivid picture. Fortunately that task is easier for me than it would be for most. I had known Knight for three years in the north and for several months as a travelling companion when I was lecturing in the United States about the work of the expedition of which we both had been members. Part of his task on the lecture tour was to give brief speeches when I was otherwise occupied, and to talk to newspaper men and others who wanted to know about our arctic work, when I was either too tired or busy to see them. Such intimate intercourse had naturally familiarized me with his ideas and with how his mind worked. Eleven years in the Arctic have made me familiar with the conditions there and the methods that should be used in dealing with them. Thus I am equipped by a knowledge of the man and the circumstances for reading between the lines of Knight's laconic diary.

The whole party evidently landed in high spirits. To Crawford and Galle it was a wonderful new adventure with a haze of romance over the land and over the coming winter. To Knight it was a homecoming to the Arctic which, as he used to explain to his city friends, was the one place of which he never tired, and where he localized all his plans and dreams of the future. To Maurer it was even more of a homecoming, for on this very island he had spent six strenuous months. Those had been difficult months, but he who thinks that such experiences should have deterred Maurer from going back knows little of human nature and nothing of the history of arctic exploration. Apart from a few unrelieved tragedies, the most difficult arctic experiences have seldom diminished the enthusiasm of those who took part in them. For one thing, the participants could always see afterwards

how easily trouble might have been avoided and were eager to try again, feeling that their improved knowledge would enable them to meet what had once been insoluble difficulties.

Immediately on landing, the party, as previously related, erected a flagpole, hoisted the Union Jack, and ceremonially reaffirmed possession of Wrangel Island. This ceremony, of course, had no legal importance, the whole force of the undertaking being in the character and permanence of the occupation itself.

The diary shows the greatest satisfaction with Wrangel Island. The outfit had been landed from the schooner the evening of September 15th. On the 16th Knight for the first time sat on the land while he wrote the day's entry: 'After unloading we slept on the ship, but the wind arose from the south and we were called at three A.M. We had time to get our personal stuff ashore, and the *Silver Wave* departed with three whistles and a great deal of flag dipping, leaving us to our own resources. We have a good outfit, and the fox tracks look promising, so we should have a successful winter. The surprising thing to me is the weather, nice gentle winds with an uncommon amount of sunshine for this time of year and not an ice cake in sight. We see an occasional seal some distance out, but if they were killed it is doubtful if we could get them [for they would doubtless sink]. We have a dory, but the surf is unceasing, so it is difficult to launch it. I had a shot at a large walrus, but missed. . . . We have an Eskimo woman with us who is sewing clothing, and she is doing very nicely. We are now busy stacking firewood and getting quarters ready for the winter.

'*September 17th.* — . . . Crawford took a long walk inland. Maurer and I went about three miles to the westward and found great quantities of driftwood. This is a good place for fuel. A large number of things I ordered in Seattle did not arrive, and a box of prunes opened to-day were found to be maggoty. Rather a poor thing to do to a party going north.

'*September 18th.* — A beautiful day. Maurer, Galle and I cut

and stacked wood all day in preparation for hauling on the arrival of snow. Saw a seal and dozens of seagulls and terns. . . . No ice in sight. A great number of white owls about, a few ravens, but we have not seen a sign of ptarmigan.

'September 19th. — Everybody busy. Galle making a tool chest, Maurer putting supplies in shape, Crawford getting out meteorological instruments, and myself repairing sledge and dog harness.' 'Everybody busy' followed by such details as these is a typical entry in Knight's diary, and we shall not repeat them. All hands seem to have worked amiably and energetically in getting things ready for winter.

'September 20th. — Busy digging out the side of a cut bank for space to pitch our winter quarters. We can use one side of the bank for a side of the house and the roof will be sod. The two ends will be built of snow blocks. We will pitch the ten by twelve and the eight by ten tents end to end [inside the house] and will use the small tent for a kitchen and the large tent for living quarters. . . . There is no snow or ice, and the prospect for seals looks rather gloomy until the ice does come. There are a few seals about, but they stay a long distance from shore.'

Like many other entries in Knight's diary, the above description of the proposed winter quarters is lucid and complete to those who know the style of dwelling he had in mind, but meaningless to others. Evidently Knight and Maurer in planning the camp were drawing on their experience in Northern Alaska and in North-western Arctic Canada, where houses of this kind are the preferred type of winter dwelling.

The first step in building the typical winter trapper's camp is the erection of two uprights upon which is placed a ridge pole. The ends and side walls of the house may then be built in one of many ways. The Wrangel party used the side of a steep hill for one end and snow blocks for the other three walls. Next, rafters are put up with one end of each rafter resting on the side wall and the other on the ridge pole. Snow blocks are then laid over the roof in the manner of turf on the roof of a sod house. If the tent to be pitched inside is

seven feet high the house would be nine or ten feet from floor to ridge pole, and if the tent is ten feet wide and fourteen feet long the structure housing it would be at least fourteen feet wide and eighteen long. Since the Wrangel party pitched two tents end to end, the house which covered them must have had dimensions at least fourteen feet in width and twenty-four feet in length.¹

When the wood-burning stoves were put up in the two tents the stovepipes would be long enough to reach up through the roof of the house built outside the tents and high enough above to clear the ridge pole by one or two feet so as to prevent wind from eddying over the ridge and blowing the smoke down into the stovepipe.

Through many years I have had many friends, both white and Eskimo, living in such winter camps on the north coast of Alaska, and they have sometimes been used by my own parties. There is the theoretical objection to them that they shut out completely the sun's light, but this is only a theoretical defect, for during the middle of winter the sun is either below the horizon or else peeps above it at noon for only a few hours. When the sun is up the occupants of the house are probably out of doors anyway, doing work which begins in the morning before sunrise and ends in the evening long after sunset.

There is a theory based on a priori reasoning that the absence of sunlight is depressing to the human spirit. We have discussed this elsewhere,² and have produced ample evidence to show that the effects are only those of suggestion

¹ These speculations were written before we recovered the pages from Knight's diary which had been torn out by Mr. Noice (see Appendix IV). When those pages were recovered, we found the entry for October 22nd and have inserted Knight's own figures and description — see *post*. We had made an attempt to write the whole story while the abstracted pages were still missing, filling in the blanks by conjecture as best we could. As we got possession of further documents, we kept interpolating the facts contained in them. This progressive correcting is one of the reasons for certain unevennesses and repetitions in the text which could not be fully smoothed out because of the hurry of going to press.

² *The Friendly Arctic*, pp. 22-4.

—you are depressed, perhaps, but only if you have been expecting to be depressed and are thus the victim of auto-suggestion. In any case there is certainly no evidence in Knight's diary that the party were depressed by either their dwelling-place or any other circumstance. Ada Blackjack, who was used to this sort of house, liked the Wrangel camp and says that it was very comfortable.

In the letters written immediately after landing and sent back to me with the *Silver Wave*, there are several references to the abundance of polar bear tracks on the beaches, and other signs of game. But it was almost a week after landing before they saw the first bear, as recorded by Knight's entry for September 21st: 'Just after breakfast Galle went up on the bluff and saw a bear about two miles west of camp. He was a full-grown male with a rather good skin, which we carefully saved. The carcass was cut up and cached, and will be hauled home when the weather permits [when sufficient snow has fallen to permit sledging]. Enough was carried home by us to feed the dogs in the meantime. No sign of ice as yet.'

'September 22. — This afternoon I hitched up the dogs and started east to bring back a four by six plank that had been found a few days previous. About two miles east of camp I came to fresh bear tracks going east. The dogs immediately became excited, and when I got them stopped I saw the bear a quarter of a mile ahead. Having an empty sled and no place to tie the dogs, I returned to camp. . . . We did not go back after the bear, for we already have the carcass of one out on the tundra and no way to bring it in.'

This entry and many others like it in Knight's diary have been the basis for the criticism of various newspaper commentators who say that not carrying home on their backs or on pack dogs the meat of the bear killed and not trying to kill the other shows laziness or incompetence, if not both. Before stating our attitude towards that view we shall consider first the general practice of those who live by hunting. We can then see what the attitude of a practised hunter must

necessarily be towards a narrative such as that of Lorne Knight's diary.

The summer of 1910, for example, we found ourselves in a position typical for white, Indian, or Eskimo hunters in a country where game is scarce. We were then on the Coppermine River in Arctic Canada. Game was unusually scarce; all the cows and younger caribou had left the country, and there were only straggling bulls, found singly or in pairs. I would frequently hunt from ten to fifteen hours before seeing the first caribou, and it might then take from one to several hours to make the approach. When the animal had been killed, I would spend an hour or two cutting the bones out of the meat to make it lighter, for I knew that any left behind would be eaten within a few hours by wolves, wolverines, ravens or gulls. I would then make up a back load of anything from seventy-five to a hundred and twenty-five pounds of clear meat and carry it home, sometimes as far as twenty miles.

Such is bound to be the ordinary routine of a hunter who has no accumulated provisions, and finds himself in a section where game is scarce. Critics who know this have said that the Wrangel party were in an easy situation as hunting goes, but completely failed to meet it. The abundance of fox and bear tracks and the gulls and ravens mentioned by Knight as flying about everywhere showed that any meat left exposed away from camp would be devoured presently. The critics point out that when a single hunter as a matter of daily routine devotes ten to twenty-four hours to the securing of a hundred-pound load of meat, it is absurdly simple for five sturdy people such as the Wrangel Island party to go out two miles and bring home five back loads averaging one hundred pounds each. With the bones cut out this would be all the meat of even a large bear; with the bones left in, the entire carcass could be brought home in two such trips, each round trip not occupying more than three hours.

He who desires to take this attitude will find more material for criticism elsewhere in the diary and other expedition papers. In his letter to his mother under date of November 23rd, 1921, Knight has the following:

'I forgot to say before that for a short time after we arrived here the bears were so thick we could see them in all directions at all times. We did not kill as many as we would wish, for there was no way to get them to camp, for the ground was bare and sleighing impossible.'

The correct critical word for such practices and methods is not, however, 'incompetence' nor 'laziness,' but 'over-confidence' or 'excessive optimism,' and the true explanation follows:

During his four years on my expedition, whether under Storkerson's immediate leadership or mine, Knight had frequently seen our meat supply dwindle until we were travelling with almost empty sledges in a region where no human being had ever been before and where we had no knowledge of food conditions except the general theory we held that the Arctic as a whole is one of the best game sections of the world. In one or two of these cases we had been compelled to go on half rations for a few days, but that had never been directly the result of absence of game but due instead to some special circumstance, such as our great hurry to reach a given destination and the consequent unwillingness to pause for hunting. The islands over which Knight had travelled with us had no driftwood, so that much of the animal fat which we might otherwise have used for food was necessarily burned instead for cooking and heating; but on the Wrangel beach Knight could see everywhere the finest of dry wood for fuel. And if the islands north of Canada had been lacking in driftwood, the same was even more true of the hundreds of miles of shifting ice floes over which Knight had travelled, where the waters below were our only source of food and fuel. To a man of such experiences, Wrangel Island seemed a paradise. Knight doubtless thought to himself that even if the polar bears should later become few, a few were better than none, and he was used to making a living where not a single bear would be seen for years at a time. And if he and his companions had already been successful for years in depending on seals for both food and fuel, surely he with another set of

companions would be successful in Wrangel, where the fuel was already provided and the whole of every animal could therefore be used for food. Besides, there were the clumsy walrus out in the water, and Knight was as yet of the opinion that the dory would serve in place of a umiak to hunt them.

On the basis of such experience, then, what could be more reasonable than to say to yourself that you would not kill the bears that came in the snowless autumn because carrying meat on your back is hard work, but would take instead those that were coming next winter because sledging meat home with a dog team over snow-covered ground is easy.

It must also be remembered that the temperament of the hunter is necessarily that of an optimist. Confidence that cheques will be honoured and obligations met is fundamental in the business world. The farmer expects rain in time for his crops in a country where the meteorologist could show that the chances are dubious. The hunter who sees no game to-day expects that he will be successful to-morrow. We may well agree that the Wrangel Island party should have killed every bear they saw and that they should have carried home the meat of those they did kill before the birds and beasts devoured it, but if we are fair we must concede that this is only the wisdom that comes so easily after the event. I might have done better with my eleven years of experience; so might you with no experience at all; but the emphasis is on the *might*, and we can quite see that neither laziness nor incompetence but only a superabundance of faith were involved in these omissions. A farmer in a remote district may buy a cartload of groceries when he goes to the village; but most of us buy only a little at a time, because we know where we can always get more. That is evidently how the Wrangel party felt whether about bears to be shot or meat to be fetched home — they knew where they could get more at any time.

It is also important to remember that the consequences of this excessive optimism were not as serious as most critics have supposed. They have been misled not so much through their unfamiliarity with the Arctic as by their unfamiliarity with the documents in the case. Knight's diary shows that

the final tragedy did not result from a shortage of food.

September 23rd Knight records that they preserved as a scientific specimen the skin of an owl, but ate the meat, and that it was 'similar to chicken and very good.' That is the verdict, I think, of a substantial majority of the members of our various expeditions who have eaten snowy owl. We have in the north a half-dozen of the varieties of geese that are considered such good eating in southern countries, and many other fashionable game birds, such as ducks, plovers, and ptarmigan. But so far as I remember, all our men have agreed that the young snowy owl is better eating than any of these.

Knight records that 'our seamstress is busy making clothing. . . . Am feeding the dogs heavily, trying to get them in working shape. Have already got the harness and sled in good order. Hope the cold weather comes soon.' The next day he mentions that they are still waiting for snow to haul home the meat of animals killed and to haul the logs they wanted to split and use as rafters for the house. On September 25th they 'erected a forty-foot [permanent] flagpole and hoisted the Union Jack. Have always understood that this island was hard to reach by ship, but by all indications it is no harder to reach than any southern port. For nice, clear sailing in northern waters this cannot be excelled.'

'September 26th. — All hands busy cutting and splitting logs for the sides and roof of the house. It is a great sight to see all the fine, dry wood after being on the islands north of Canada where driftwood is scarce. Our seamstress is busy making clothing, and we have a great many clothing skins, so our outfit should be comfortable. A large number of ducks and gulls seen.'

September 27th the ocean was still free of ice, and snow was still lacking for sledging over the land. But on that day for the first time since the arrival of the party a thermometer placed in the shade failed to rise above the freezing-point, the maximum being 30° and the minimum 18° Fahrenheit. On such an arctic autumn day the temperature shown by a

thermometer placed on a black surface in the sun would be about twenty degrees warmer than in the shade, or about 50° F.

The meat from the bears killed which they carried to the camp in back loads was apparently not much more than what was needed from day by day. On September 30th 'Crawford and Galle started to pack¹ home some bear meat, but when close to the carcass they saw a bear. Crawford sent Galle to camp for Maurer and me, but when we got to the place where the bear had been we saw Crawford in the distance coming our way. He told us that before we arrived the bear had seen him and had started westward. Crawford followed and got a long-distance shot, but the bear got away.'

October 1st was 'rather a good day for us. Shortly after breakfast I went outside and saw a bear crossing the river about half a mile above camp. Maurer and I set out with our guns, but the dogs had been restless all the morning and were very noisy. The bear evidently heard them, for she started inland for the mountains. We chased her for about three miles, and then with the glasses we could see her about three miles ahead of us going rapidly north-west. She had two cubs with her. We gave up the chase and returned to camp. This evening after supper the native woman went outside and rushed in to tell us that she saw a bear coming along the beach from the westward. Maurer ran and hid behind the dory and waited. The dogs did not see the bear and apparently the bear did not know about the camp. When about 150 feet from Maurer, he let drive, hitting him behind the shoulder. Maurer shot again and missed, so I ran down the beach and shot once, knocking him down. I still ran toward him, and when about sixty feet from him he arose and started for me. I sat down, took good aim, and shot him through the head, killing him instantly about a hundred yards from camp and thirty feet from the water. Male three-quarters grown, poor fur, medium amount of fat.'

Evidently the bears were very numerous, for most of the

¹ *To pack*, in the jargon of the north, means to transport on the backs of men or dogs.

large number reported were seen because they came to the vicinity of the camp. When bears were seen at a distance it was not the result of a search, for the party were still waiting for snow before beginning to emphasize the hunt. Whenever they took a walk for any reason they saw game, as on October 2nd, when there was 'Very little to do about camp, so Galle took a walk to the westward and saw three bears coming towards him. He was afraid to tackle them, so came after help. They disappeared by the time the rest of us got to where they were last seen.'

October 3rd: 'After breakfast the dogs set up a bear howl. Rushing out of the tent we saw a large bear with a cub to the east of the camp. They had heard the dogs, and were of the opinion that they had lost nothing about this camp. Therefore, they were rapidly leaving. Crawford and Galle followed, and it is now eleven P.M. and they have not returned.

Later: The boys arrived at midnight, reporting that they had been to the east fifteen miles, and had apparently found Rodgers Harbour. 'They killed a female bear with two cubs.'

Knight does not tell us the exact date upon which enough snow fell for sledging, but this was evidently some time after October 10th, for on that day he says: 'This morning Galle went eastward to the three bears killed, intending to bring back a ham from one of the cubs, but he returned with the information that the cubs had been nearly all eaten by the foxes. Hitched up the dogs for exercise, but did not go far for lack of snow.' This entry reminds us again of the optimistic feeling which the whole party evidently shared with Knight, that there was no particular need for saving what meat they had. The inference from 'the cubs had been nearly all eaten by the foxes' is that the meat of the old bear, less palatable no doubt, but still good dog feed, was as yet uneaten, and still they neither carried it home on their backs nor hauled it home on the sledge, a thing that can be done even when snow is absent. Galle had gone to fetch cub meat merely because they thought it would be a change in their diet, and he seems to have returned without any meat at all just because the most palatable parts were missing. We emphasize this

because it shows again how firm they were in their optimism.

October 11th was 'rather a good day for us. About one-thirty P.M. Galle saw a bear to the north of camp. He and Maurer went after him, but the bear saw them and ran to the west. They gave chase, as the bear had been wounded when he started to run. When about three miles west of camp the pursued bear was rapidly gaining away when a female bear with two yearling cubs was seen approaching from the west. She came to where the boys were hidden and they killed the old bear and one cub, the other cub getting away. I went to help them. After finishing skinning, Maurer returned to camp and Galle and I lay in wait for a large bear and cub approaching from the west. Darkness, however, coming on, and the approaching bears' course rather uncertain, we returned to camp. Eight bears were seen to-day, and literally hundreds of tracks.'

On October 13th: 'Galle and Crawford were just starting to take a walk to the westward when Galle, who seems always to see things first, saw a bear near camp to the east. [They] immediately shot and wounded her slightly and she took to the water. I ran along the beach abreast of her and shot her through the head. She was about a two-year-old with not as much fat as the bears we have killed formerly.' On October 14th 'Crawford and Galle took a walk to the westward and did a little exploring. We had an idea we were perhaps nearly to the west end of the island. They are sure that they saw a mountain at least thirty miles farther west. We think now that we are a little east of Doubtful Harbour.'

It is possible to infer from the entry for October 17th that by then enough snow had come for sledging. But the sea was still free of ice and sealing, therefore, impossible.

On October 22nd we are 'at last in our winter house. Spent all day moving. It is a large frame house covered with snow blocks, fourteen by twenty-four feet, with a storm shed¹ in

¹ A storm shed is so called because it is used to store firewood and other necessities so you don't have to go outdoors for them in really bad weather. Another purpose is to prevent snow from swirling into the house proper when the door is opened.

front nine by fourteen feet. Inside of the frame house are two tents, one eight by ten and one ten by twelve, pitched end to end and sewed together.'

The next few days they kept improving their quarters, and there are in several places in the diary expressions of their satisfaction in the comfort of the house. On October 23rd they brought most of their supplies into the storm shed. On the 24th 'Crawford made a table for the kitchen, Maurer made a door for the front tent, Galle and I did various necessary things about the camp.' The entries for the next few days are filled with similar details until all comforts and conveniences had been arranged. On October 27th 'All four of us went to one of our caches of meat, about one and a half miles to the westward, and brought home several days' dog feed.'

On October 31st: 'All hands went with a sled and dogs to our two caches of bear meat to the westward. The large bear and cub killed by Galle and Maurer were all eaten by birds and foxes. The first bear killed by Maurer and me had all been packed home excepting the head and neck, which we now brought. Also hauled some wood to camp.'

On November 3rd: 'Crawford and Galle, each with a back pack, started . . . to climb the large mountain north of our camp. We have been calling this Berry Peak, but east of us can be seen another mountain, which may be Berry Peak. The explorers will leave a record and monument on the mountain and Crawford intends to do some geological work.' But the next day's entry tells that the party returned late that evening and that 'it was blowing so hard in the mountains that they could not climb the highest of them.' It is to be inferred from the same entry that, while sea ice was beginning to form, it was not yet stable enough to be safe or suitable for hunting.

On November 6th we read that 'dog feed is getting low' and a few days later that they are cooking up groceries for the dogs. From various entries of that sort during the winter it appears that the amount of supplies taken to Wrangel Island must have been a great deal in excess of what we had planned

together before they sailed north. It had been our feeling then that full rations of groceries for six months would be all that it was reasonable to carry towards the two-year programme of a party who believed that they could be self-supporting indefinitely by hunting. In other words, we considered that supplies for even six months were luxuries and, as luxuries, were about all they should reasonably allow themselves. At that time they had been saying that they preferred to spend what money we had for phonographs, of which they were all fond, and for sweets and chocolate, to which some of them were partial.

There had been two motives in planning that fox trapping should be carried on energetically throughout the winter. We were not quite certain of getting Government support next year, so that any money we could earn might be needed towards our expenses, and we desired to demonstrate that an occupation of the island could be made profitable along such old-fashioned lines as have been followed by the Hudson's Bay Company and other traders in the Arctic. Not that we were much concerned with the value of Wrangel as a trapping island, but we wanted to show that it had also this additional merit.

The entry for November 7th indicates that a good many traps had been set already, but references to them throughout the winter show that, while foxes were numerous, the trapping was not very successful. This is not surprising, for the two experienced arctic men, Knight and Maurer, had never seen trapping done. They had been members of a scientific expedition to which were attached a few Eskimos. From the zoological point of view we had wanted foxes, and these had been caught for us chiefly by the Eskimos or by one or two old white trappers who were with us. I have never set a trap in all my arctic years, and I do not suppose either Knight or Maurer ever had. The theory was so simple, however, that success might have been expected. But one peculiarity of the Wrangel Island weather brought a difficulty which they do not seem to have found a way to meet. So far as we can judge from the diary, the traps were

set according to a method successful where the snow lies soft on the spot where it falls. But in an open island like Wrangel the snow is light and dry, and the wind will pack it into and over a trap set without a cover. Even when a thin cover of snow is used, the location has to be carefully chosen to prevent more snow piling on top and making the cover so thick that the light feet of a fox can go over instead of breaking through to be caught. Although there were a good many foxes actually captured, they were evidently only a small fraction of the numbers that could have been secured. From the point of view of the safety of the expedition and its success, this was really of no consequence. The meat of foxes amounts to little. One bear is worth a hundred foxes. For showing the value of the island, the observations of the men while trapping (about tracks and other signs) were as valuable as the skins actually secured, for what we wanted was really only the information as to the abundance of animals that are commercially important. We wanted to secure evidence of the value of the island; the value itself we were not so particular to secure.

On November 7th: 'Galle went to his traps and found two gone [they had evidently been badly fastened and the foxes caught had carried them off]. He got one fox. Coming home in the dark he got temporarily lost and saw a bear while wandering around trying to find his way home. He did not shoot it, although we are rather short of dog feed. He says that he did not know where he was, so he let the bear go.' This was evidently felt by the whole party as a misfortune, for the bears seen were much fewer now than they had been earlier in the year. They were at last beginning to be conscious of the importance of getting and saving any meat that came their way.

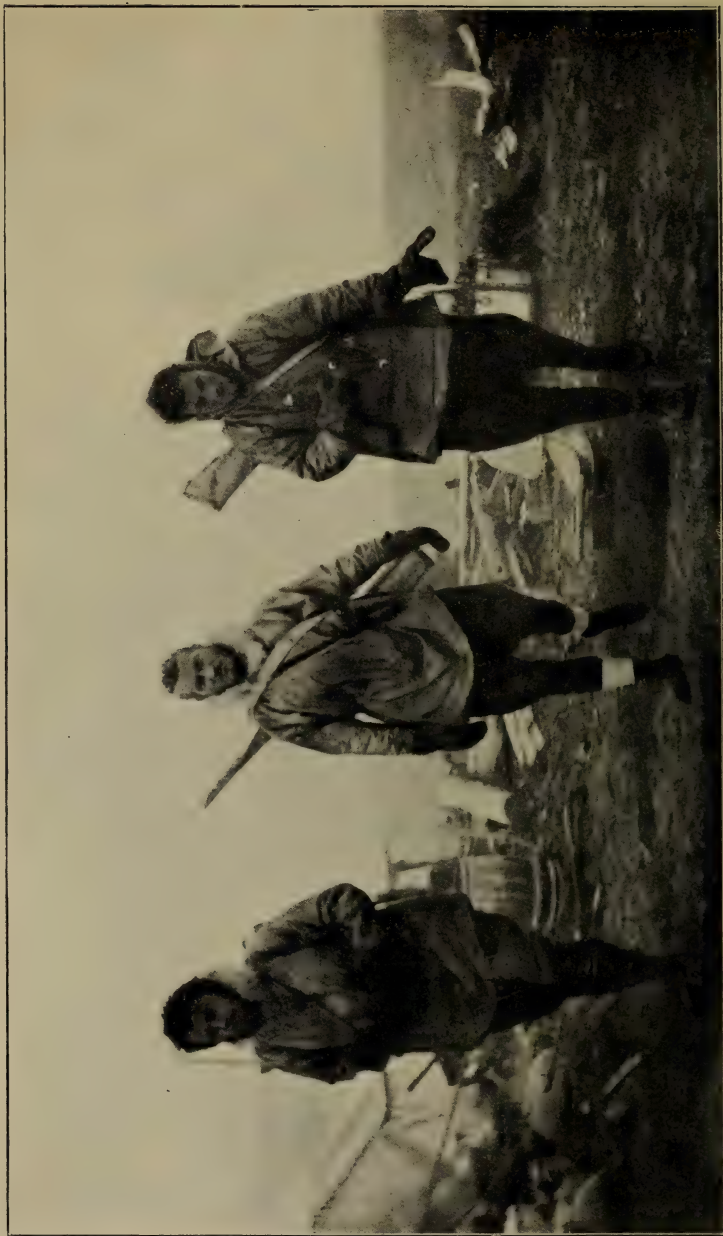
Since the party had decided not to hunt until there was ample snow for sledging the meat home, the exceptionally late season was a misfortune to them. Apart from that, their preparations for the winter seem to have gone smoothly and much according to plan. The outer house with the tent inside proved to be a comfortable dwelling and there was



THE CAMP IN LATE AUTUMN. ADA BLACKJACK STANDING BY THE MAIN TENT.



BUILDING THE SNOW WALLS (ON PRINCIPLES ENTIRELY DIFFERENT FROM THE REAL ESKIMO SNOW-HOUSE) FOR THE OUTER HOUSE WITHIN WHICH THE TENTS WERE TO BE PITCHED FOR WINTER.



CRAWFORD (ON THE READER'S LEFT), MAURER AND GALLE STARTING OFF FOR A HUNT.

plenty of dry wood for fuel, a circumstance which Knight mentions frequently. He seems to have continued to consider it almost too good to be true, for it differed so much from his previous arctic experience.

Before they sailed north we had frequently discussed the plans for the winter. It had been the experience of our various expeditions and it has been the general experience of polar explorers that when a number of men lie idle in camp waiting for winter to pass, there is tedium, quarrelling and even general decline in health. No matter how good the cooking or varied the diet, the men get tired of their food; and no matter how congenial they may be ordinarily, they also become tired of each other. Some explorers, even in recent years, have considered it necessary to keep the men in camp during midwinter, thinking the storms, darkness and low temperature too disagreeable to be faced. But through his experience of the methods used by our expeditions, Knight looked upon the midwinter as second only to the early spring as a period of travel and other activity. Maurer had had experience of being confined in a ship both when he was on an arctic whaler and later when on our ship, the *Karluk*, and he was equally of the view that every man should be outdoors, occupied in some interesting and profitable way every day of the winter except when a special gale was blowing. On this basis we had agreed before they sailed north that the party should establish at least two camps about ten or fifteen miles apart. They themselves had advanced the plan of having four camps, each with one man, but I had suggested they start with two men in each of two camps and then change partners occasionally. If that did not work, they would establish more camps. For daily activity they had the hunting and the trapping of foxes. In the Arctic an Eskimo who hunts and traps for a living ordinarily leaves his family in the morning and returns to it at night. But the white trapper will have 'a line of cabins,' sometimes as many as seven or eight houses ten to fifteen miles apart. If this is in the interior of some land, the houses are arranged in a great circle; but if it is on a coast, they are naturally in a line. The

trapper leaves a cabin in the morning and sleeps in the next one that night, reaching the third the next day, and so on. Each cabin has a stove or fireplace and is equipped with a cooking outfit and bedding. Since this is the method regularly and safely followed by many dozens of experienced trappers, there is no reason why it should not be safe and practical for explorers; it is only those who have no experience of the country who think the risk involved considerable. To us who do such things every day, the journeys between the cabins seem no more dangerous than taxi rides across a city.

What actually happened on Wrangel Island was that a trapping camp was established about eight miles away from the main camp and occupied at first by Crawford and Maurer, leaving Knight and Galle at the main base. Whenever one or both of the men in either camp wished, they could walk to the other, visiting on the way all the traps they had set and watching as they went for polar bears. The chance of getting bears at this season is not very great. The noon twilight is ample for distinguishing black objects at a distance of several miles, but not for seeing bears that are white against a white background. Still, if one is constantly on the watch he is likely some time or other to meet a bear close enough to see him.

November 17th they were 'All ready to start with the trapping outfit,' and on November 18th 'Crawford, Maurer and I left camp at six fifteen A.M. and travelled east for three hours through heavy, soft snow. Reached a small cove where wood seemed plentiful, so stopped and erected a frame of drift-wood for the eight by ten tent. Not having had any sleep the night previous, we turned in early and the 19th we hauled wood and cut blocks for the walls [of the house within which they intended to pitch the tent]. The snow was poor about the camp so blocks had to be cut on the hillside about two hundred feet away. At dark it started to blow and snow and we were forced to quit, but we had by that time put all the blocks on one side of the house. We finally decided that I should return to the main camp on the next morning, the 20th, which I did.'

'During the night of the 19th and 20th one of the dogs named Snowball went crazy and became very dangerous, fighting with the other dogs and snapping at the men. He will not eat and continually barks at nothing. There is nothing that I can do as far as I know.' This dog died soon thereafter.

The climate of November and the first half of December in Wrangel Island seems to have been much like that of December and January in Moscow or Chicago, varying in November from freezing to ten or fifteen degrees below zero and becoming on the average colder in December until the coldest days would have been considered extremely cold and disagreeable even in Montreal. But dressed in furs, comfortably housed and used to an arctic climate, Knight seems to have found the weather surprisingly mild, although on the average stormier than he had expected. Even after an abundance of snow had fallen there remained large bare patches on the ground where it was swept clean by the wind, and sledging remained bad until towards the middle of the winter.

The diary relates that from day to day they made their camp more comfortable and convenient for themselves but that the dogs were still without shelter. Well-furred Eskimo dogs as they were, it was no great hardship for them to sleep out. But December 12th it was storming and there was nothing else to do, so the boys built a house for the dogs with a separate alcove for each of the seven, and connected it by a covered passage-way with their own house so that a certain amount of warmth might pass through. Knight does not explain it, but, according to our customary way of doing things, they doubtless arranged that the dog house was on a higher level than the living quarters of the people, the result being that as a part of the ventilation system the warm air that was going out of the house passed through the alley-way and through the dog house on its way to the outdoors. Knight was always very thoughtful about the comfort of animals, and his diary shows that he took a keen interest in this provision for the increased welfare of the team. He was

feeding them with warm cooked food every day. That was not a kindness, for the dogs would doubtless have preferred frozen meat and the boys knew that very well; but meat was short just then and the dogs as well as the men had to live on tinned foods.

Although the best season for bears was over, there were stragglers about in December. But in most cases some accident allowed them to get away – usually the inadequate light and the fact that they ordinarily came around at night. The entry for December 13th is typical, although it records better fortune than ordinary. ‘Arose early to go sealing, but there was a fresh breeze from the north, cloudy and foggy, consequently nearly dark [even at noon]. Galle went to his traps and I went to the trapping camp [of Crawford and Maurer] to haul them a big log for firewood. A bear had been at their camp yesterday and had tried to come into their storm shed, but he left rather hurriedly after some ineffectual shooting. It was nearly dark when I started home, blowing a gale from the north and drifting so thick that at times I could not see the leader. But, like the good dog he is, he did not leave the trail once. But the best news of all I received from Galle. Coming home about an hour before me he saw a bear alongside the house eating some walrus skin. He shot and hit it, but the bear did not stop until Galle fired again. . . . It was skinned and cut up when I got home.’

Fortunately we have a full account of the adventures of December 13th in a letter which Lorne wrote to his mother – the letter his father mentions in the introduction to this volume as having been withheld from her by Mr. Noice for several months and which he finally turned over to her mutilated. The letter was written serially at odd moments throughout most of the first year. The details were probably omitted from the diary because they had been written into the letter. We print from it an extract sent us for that purpose by Lorne’s father.

‘Just before the boys came down to the main camp for Christmas, they had a curious experience, which I will try

and tell. . . . In their camp they had an eight by ten tent inside of a snow house, and in front of this was a snow storm shed about four by eight. The door into this shed was about four feet high and sixteen inches wide. The door into the tent from the storm shed was an opening two feet wide. There was, of course, no back door to the camp. I hope you understand. You do? Good! Well, one morning while the fellows were eating breakfast, Maurer, who was sitting nearest the door, happened to raise the tent flap to look for something in the shed, and lo and behold! what had his head in the outside door but a great big "Bar." He was doing the sniffing stunt and did not seem to pay much attention to Maurer when he stuck his head out of the tent. He (the bear) just continued sniffing. I must say here that both of the men's rifles were outside. Maurer immediately called a retreat to the back of the tent, where he and Crawford held a consultation of war.

'About this time the bear seemingly smelt something in the storm shed that he thought he would like, so he started to come in; but his shoulders would not go through the door. Although a snow wall is strong so is a bear strong, and it was up to Crawford and Maurer to keep that bear outside where he belonged.

'At this point Maurer let out a terrible war whoop, but he could have whooped until eternity as far as the bear cared. So the fellows started to throw things; first the fire wood, and then the pots and pans, and finally dishes. Of course, the bear was hit several times, but he was determined to come in.

'His old snoot was working from side to side and the digestive juices were dropping from the end of his tongue. I guess he was hungry. At last, burning pieces of wood from the stove began coming his way and, after a little of this, he retreated a short distance from the camp.

'Crawford, who was dressed warmer than Maurer, rushed out first and grabbed his gun. The bear was off about a hundred yards looking back. Crawford dropped on his knee and took good aim. The cartridge did not go off because of the cold, and Crawford got excited, and the bear started off

with a gallop. Maurer came out at this time, got his gun and followed for a distance, but the bear was too fast.

'I went to the trapping camp that day and arrived about an hour or so after the above happened. Although the fellows would not admit it, I am sure they were scared stiff. But this is not all. I got home after dark and found Galle home from his traps. When he got close to camp he saw a bear sniffing about undisturbed, for I had the dogs. He killed it and went inside the house and found the woman sitting in the dark, half dead with fear. She was so frightened [for she had heard the bear outside] that she did not put wood in the stove, so, consequently, was nearly frozen. Although we lost one bear that day, we got another. . . .'

December 16th: 'I went to the other camp, taking them some bear meat, and hauled some wood for them. Galle went to the traps, but got nothing. He saw a bear . . . but before he could get within shooting distance it turned out on the sea ice and escaped.' 'Maurer and Crawford are planning coming to this camp for Christmas.'

On December 24th: 'I went to the other camp and found that a bear had been there this morning while they were asleep, but before they got out it had become frightened and had run away.' Such entries are numerous, and show that the party were still extremely optimistic. On journeys when Knight had been with me and on others of which he must have heard us talking frequently, we used to take turns day and night watching so that no animal that approached camp had a chance to get away. There is not a single entry in Knight's diary to indicate that they even considered doing this. Evidently they continued to feel that it did not make much difference how many chances they missed; there would always be an abundance of other chances. Wrangel Island was to them a game paradise beyond anything they had experienced.

No one who has kept a diary on an exploring expedition will be surprised or critical because Knight leaves the most important things to be inferred from the context or to be

detected by some casual reference later. My experience, at least, has been that, although I keep more voluminous notes than most travellers, still the things that stick in my memory after a lapse of years are usually the ones that have never been mentioned in the notes of the day. So it comes about that Knight records how he himself, Galle and the Eskimo woman were looking forward to Christmas eagerly, chiefly because Crawford and Maurer were coming home to spend it with them, and goes on to tell how Ada was singing all day at her sewing and how she cooked and prepared in every way for Christmas, but does not mention the actual arrival of Crawford and Maurer nor anything about the Christmas itself except, 'Spending the day doing nothing but eating, although we are not hungry.'

There is further inferred evidence of the Christmas rejoicings. The party had long been waiting impatiently for a wind that would break the ice near the shore and give them open water for sealing. Such a wind finally did come Christmas night, but Knight's diary for December 26th explains laconically, 'Open water to be seen, but overslept. Hauled wood to-day.' That means that they had slept until one or two in the afternoon, or just beyond the four-hour period of adequate daylight, but that they did get up while there was a little twilight left, not enough for shooting, but ample for hauling in a sledge-load or two of wood.

An account of the holiday rejoicings might be interesting but could hardly be important. But there are important things only casually mentioned in other parts of the diary, and doubtless some were wholly left out. In that connection we must never forget that Knight did not suppose himself to be keeping the only diary — it was unforeseen accidents and tragedies that made it the only one to be preserved. Indeed, he doubtless considered that Crawford, the commanding officer, was keeping the official record and therefore the most important one. We know from Ada Blackjack that Crawford's chief orders were always issued after a discussion with Knight. Naturally Knight would expect that Crawford would enter in his diary both these decisions and the reasons

for them. Doubtless Crawford did, but his record is lost.

While we are on the subject of important things that are not mentioned in diaries, we might as well discuss the expedition cat, named Victoria, or Vic for short. She must have occupied a considerable place in the thoughts and affections of the Wrangel Island community, and still she appears only once in the two volumes of the diary. Knight did tell a good deal about her in one of his letters to his parents, and in the photographic collection she appears more often than any member of the expedition.

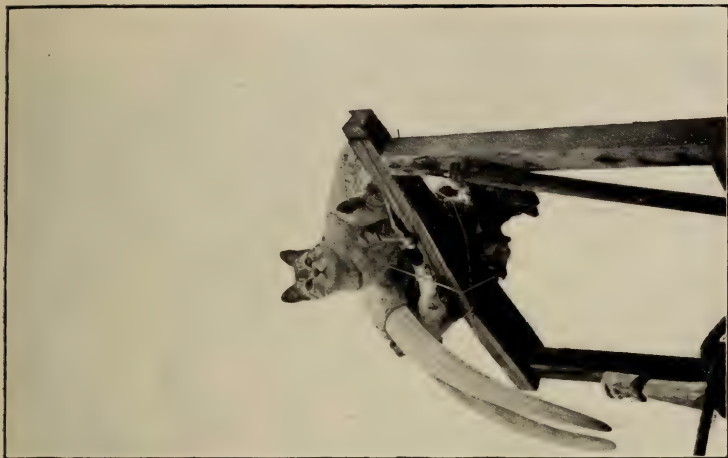
The name Victoria seems to have come from the circumstance that the kitten was presented to the expedition by the crew of the steamer *Victoria* on the voyage from Seattle to Nome. Every photograph shows her apparently fat and flourishing.

There is a curious parallel in the experiences of the cats that belonged to the two Wrangel Island expeditions. When the *Karluk* was being outfitted in Victoria in 1913 some one made us the present of a kitten. She was well taken care of and grew to maturity on the voyage north and during the *Karluk's* adventurous drift until the shipwreck near Wrangel Island in January, 1914. When the ship had to be abandoned because the water was rushing into the engine room, the cat was not forgotten. Some one slipped her under his coat, and when the temporary cabin had been built on the floe beside the gap in the ice through which the *Karluk* had sunk she was given a snug corner. I think it was Fred Maurer who later carried her ashore. Certainly I have heard from the men who were on the island that summer that he did more than his part in looking after the cat. Through all the vicissitudes of that difficult time she remained safe, and when the *King and Winge* came to pick up the marooned party Maurer took the cat with him to Nome and Victoria, and eventually to his home in Ohio, where from last reports she was still safe and contented, although now growing old.

Knight does not tell us, and so we do not know which of the four it was that looked particularly after Vic on the voyage to Wrangel Island in 1921. Since she was more in the house



CRAWFORD AND THE EXPEDITION CAT. BOTH THIS CAT AND THAT OF THE 1914 PARTY FARED WELL WHILE ON WRANGEL ISLAND AND ARE NOW SAFE IN COMFORTABLE HOMES.



THE PET OF THR EXPEDITION, NAMED VIC BECAUSE, AS A KITTEN, SHE HAD BEEN PRESENTED TO THE EXPEDITION BY THE CREW OF THE STEAMSHIP *Victoria* WHICH TOOK THE PARTY FROM SEATTLE TO NOME. VIC IS SEEN SITTING ON A WALRUS HEAD.



FRED MAURER AND THE BABY ESKIMO GIRL MAKPEK ON THE 1914 EXPEDITION. BOTH THE *Karluk's* BABY AND THE *Karluk's* CAT WERE FAT AND HAPPY THROUGH ALL THE VICISSITUDES OF THE SHIPWRECKED CREW AND ARE BOTH STILL LIVING, THE GIRL GROWN TO WOMANHOOD AND THE CAT GROWING OLD.

than the others, probably it was Ada Blackjack who ordinarily took care of her during the two years in Wrangel Island. Or it may again have been Maurer in 1922 as it was in 1914. Most likely she was continually petted and fed by everybody.

The cat of 1914 was unworried when the ship was broken and sinking. She was warm and cared for on the journey ashore while eight men died on the ice. She suffered no hardship during the summer while three men died and many were ill and all were short of food more than once. So it was with Vic later. Ada kept her well fed and sheltered during all the difficult times and Vic sailed as safely back with the *Donaldson* to Nome in 1923 as her predecessor had with the *King and Winge* nine years before.

December 27th was a day of tragedy and foreboding. There are in the polar regions a number of insidious diseases which take off dogs mysteriously. We have many folklore remedies from Eskimos, and from the miners and dog drivers of Alaska, but none of them do anything except give a temporary peace of mind to those who have faith in them. Next to the loss of a human companion is that of a dog. Even when we have several teams with half a hundred dogs, each impresses us so strongly with his distinct personality that the loss of one is the loss of an acquaintance or a friend. With a team of only six dogs the intimacy is closer and the affection warmer. The proportionate loss, too, is greater when it is one of six instead of one of fifty. To those who knew both Knight and the Arctic there is a good deal of restraint in the entry for December 27th: 'I went out to look at the dogs and found one of them dead. We hauled wood [yesterday] and at one time I thought I saw him stagger slightly, but, as he seemed to be working well later, I paid no attention to it. When I fed him he was apparently all right. He was one of our best dogs and, as the Bingville Bugle says, "his loss will be greatly felt in the community."'

THE FIRST WINTER AND THE SECOND SUMMER

ON January 1st, 1922, a council of all the members of the expedition decided that they would discontinue the separate trapping camp until there was more daylight,¹ for bears and foxes had now become very rare, the weather was continually stormy, and between the inevitable twilight and the frequent difficulty of clouds and snow the visibility was so poor that there was little chance of seeing any of the few bears that came around. With the team now reduced to five dogs, it was more difficult to haul home firewood. Apparently driftwood was scarce in the vicinity of the hunting camp, and this is given by Knight as one of the arguments for discontinuing it temporarily. It took too much out of the dogs to be working them constantly, and they could save groceries by letting the team stay in the warm house, for a dog that is idle and comfortable needs only half as much food as one that is working out in the cold.

During January there seems to have been no trapping, but a number of foxes were secured, chiefly by shooting, although the dogs killed some that came into camp. There appear to be no ptarmigan on Wrangel Island, but the diary mentions other birds in every month of winter. Usually they were seagulls or ravens, but on January 9th when the party were sealing, two 'old squaw' ducks lit on the water near them, stayed fifteen minutes and then flew on towards the west. That day, 'just after arriving at camp, Crawford shot a fox a few feet from the house. Between the dogs and the shotguns, it looks as if the traps would come in second.' They had seen seals out in the water, but none near enough to secure.

¹ In the latitude of Wrangel Island in midwinter daylight appears in a cloudless sky between eight and nine o'clock. By ten A.M. it is light enough for reading or shooting a rifle accurately and remains so till about two P.M. On a cloudy day there is light for travelling but scarcely for reading or accurate shooting. Dark objects may be seen at a distance but white ones, such as polar bears, are almost indistinguishable in thick weather, even at noon. On many days a reddish glow can be seen in the south over the sun as it moves westward below the horizon.

In general, the luck in sealing was bad throughout the winter. Part of the equipment carried was canvas for making the sort of sledge boat which we have used on all our expeditions. It is further evidence of how certain they were that fortune would turn some time, and how indifferent they were just when the turn should come, that they saw seals in open water day after day and either refrained from shooting or else shot and failed to secure them without ever considering wrapping canvas around their sled and paddling out to get them. If these had been men inexperienced in the Arctic one might call it incompetence, as some critics have done, to let food animals swim around before your eyes day after day and not take the trouble to make a boat to secure them out of the material carried for that purpose. But there are many people living in cities with a rainy climate who never wear waterproofs and never carry umbrellas, although they get wet, to the frequent damage of their clothes and the occasional injury of their health. We do not call such people incompetent. They are not necessarily less intelligent than the rest of us or less successful in life; it is merely they don't think it worth the bother to carry an umbrella. That seems to have been about the way the Wrangel party felt about making a boat to get seals. They just did not feel like bothering.

Another explanation of how indifferent they were about sealing is their greater interest in polar bears. One bear gives as much food as several seals and is easier to kill and handle.¹ They were always seeing tracks during the twilight period, and it seemed reasonable that when the daylight came back they would see the bears themselves. Even in the twilight they did see bears occasionally. January 10th: 'Crawford and Maurer went out on the ice and along the lead saw two bear tracks, fresh, going south. They followed them for some distance, but had to give it up for darkness. Galle and I

¹ The seals around Wrangel would average one hundred to one hundred and fifty pounds; if we exclude bears called 'cubs' in the diary, the rest would average five hundred pounds. A very large fat male may run well above twelve hundred pounds.

hauled wood. I was in the dog house when Galle saw a bear half a mile east of camp coming our way. The wind was west, and when about a quarter of a mile from camp the bear smelt it and was gone like a flash to seaward. We had our guns by this time and were trying to sneak up on him. When he ran we followed him for a short distance, but gave up as it was nearly dark. A few minutes later the others came home following the tracks of the same bear, which had, in turn, followed our yesterday's tracks home from the lead. Had the wind been from any other direction to-day than west, the bear would have been ours.'

January 18th was typically 'a day of hard luck. After breakfast Crawford and Maurer went east to the lead and forgot the retriever. Galle and I followed in a few minutes and when we were about half a mile from them Crawford shot a seal, which started to drift east. When we got to where they were we could not get within a hundred yards of the seal [because of water] so had to do nothing but hope that the current would change. An hour or so later Maurer shot a seal about seventy-five feet from the edge of the firm ice. I took the retriever and got him to the edge of the slush about thirty feet from us. The seal then became detached from the retriever and went under the slush. Although we worked till dark, we did not see him again. By this time the other seal had disappeared completely.'

The retriever mentioned by Knight is an Eskimo device for getting seals that have been shot not too far away in open water. It consists of a knob of wood about the size of a grapefruit with several sharp recurved steel hooks around its circumference and a loop at one end to which is attached a slender line one hundred or more feet in length. The line is held coiled in the left hand. With the right hand you grasp the line about five feet from the retriever and swing it around your head until it makes a whizzing noise. You then throw it, paying out the line as the retriever flies through the air. You should throw it farther than where the dead seal lies floating horizontally on the water. You then pull slowly towards you until the knob is about to slide over the seal

when you give a sharp jerk and one of the hooks catches in his hide. You then pull in hand over hand. This brings the seal to you if there is no slush ice, but the trouble is that on any but an exceptionally warm day slush does form along the edge of the firm ice where you are standing and you are not able to haul the seal right up to you. In such circumstances we usually make a boat by wrapping a piece of canvas around a sledge, as we have mentioned. But, as said above, the Wrangel party does not seem to have thought this worth the bother, expecting continually to be successful later by the, in a way, simpler methods which they were using.

Still, the experience of the day we have just described seems to have impressed Knight with the advisability of using a boat later, for on January 19th he tells us he is making preparations to that end.

For several days after the 19th the sealing was interfered with by too much open water. The most favourable condition is when the wind merely cracks the ice and drives it off a few yards, or at most a few hundred yards, making what is called an open lead. But now the wind was so strong that after breaking the ice it carried it out of sight and, as Knight expresses it, they had before them an open ocean. At other times the wind blew from seaward and then it packed the moving ice so close against the land floe that there was no sealing because of the absence of water.

In February they began setting traps again and caught a number of foxes, but the increasing visibility due to the lengthening day failed to increase the number of polar bears seen. On February 8th we have in the diary the first signs of worry: 'All hands hoping for open water, for the rolled oats and rice will soon be gone if we have to cook dog feed much longer.' Still, the context indicates that they are not really fearing shortage of food, but are merely regretful that these palatable items of diet will no longer be available 'for a change.'

On February 10th Knight outlines a plan the execution of which would have prevented food shortage. 'I have been thinking of establishing a camp on the north coast of the

island in the spring for the purpose of drying meat, for several reasons, viz.: should Mr. Stefansson intend to make [next winter] an ice trip [a trip north over the sea ice] from the island, the fact that the meat is on the north side of the island will save a great deal of hauling over the mountains or around the coast. Also I think that there should be two camps of two men each [to prevent the party from getting on each other's nerves by being constantly together]. Another reason is that if Mr. Stefansson does not or cannot come next summer, we will have all the autumn to haul the meat to this camp and with the meat that will be put up here this will go a long way to tide us over the winter. Should Mr. Stefansson decide not to stay on the island, it will be a small matter to go by ship and pick up the meat, which will be on a point or some other place which a ship can reach easily. I have talked this over with Crawford and he agrees with me on this as a good plan.'

I think this excellent plan may have come indirectly from Maurer, although it is here mentioned as being discussed by Knight and Crawford, for this had been the method adopted by Hadley in the spring of 1914 after Maurer and the other shipwrecked men of the *Karluk* landed in Wrangel Island. To the north of Wrangel the ice is aground for about forty miles from shore. Hadley crossed this stretch (see 'Hadley's Narrative' *ante*) and camped at the meeting edge of the floe and the moving pack, where bears were numerous and where sealing was occasionally possible — whenever the wind was right. The scarcity of polar bears on Wrangel Island itself in the spring could be legitimately presumed to mean that they were abundant out at the floe edge thirty or forty miles beyond. Knight never tells us exactly why this plan was not carried out, but we can read it between the lines. It was still the same confidence in the island as such a good game country that precautions which might be necessary elsewhere would not be necessary here. The impression of the first few weeks when they 'could see bears in every direction' was still strong in their minds.

In the Arctic, February is usually the coldest month of the

year. On the 17th: 'Last night was the coldest it has been since we have been on the island, -40° F.' They did have it -47° February 25th, but even that does not seem very cold to one brought up in certain parts of the United States or Canada. For comparison I have looked up the lowest temperatures in various states of the Union and in the various provinces of Canada. We find that the following have at one time or another recorded lower minimums than the Wrangel Island party experienced: Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota, Wisconsin, Wyoming, Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec, Saskatchewan. Vermont has a record of just 47° below zero, New York 46° , and even Pennsylvania has 42° below. Since the fashion of speaking of cold weather in terms of 'below freezing' seems to be growing, it is worth while to emphasize that the Pennsylvania temperature of 42° below zero is the same as 74° below freezing.

On the northern edge of the cereal belt of Siberia, in the province of Yakutsk, are farmers (blond Russians) who face every year minimum temperatures from -60° to -90° , or from 10° to 40° Fahrenheit colder than the extreme minimum of Wrangel Island.

Between February 26th and March 1st Maurer and Galle made a trip about fifteen miles east along the coast to visit Rodgers Harbour, the site of one of the camps of the *Karluk* crew while they were on Wrangel Island. The scene was familiar to Maurer, and they found everything as it had been left by his companions in 1914 except for the inevitable effects of wind and weather. They saw 'a few fairly fresh bear tracks, but no bears.' Although this was about the coldest week of the year, with the temperature ranging between -16° and -42° the trip seems to have been made in comfort, for that subject is not even mentioned.

In February the entire party lived together at the main camp, but in March Crawford and Maurer again began to spend part of the time at the 'trapping camp.' A few foxes were caught and tracks of bears were frequently seen, but bad luck in not seeing the bears themselves began to be monotonous. Ravens were occasional visitors, but

there is no mention of other birds in February or March.

March 22nd: 'Crawford and I would like to make a trip around the island, but the question is dog feed. I am still cooking for them and could also do that while travelling, although it would be a nuisance. We are like Mr. Micawber waiting for something to turn up; and we are keeping a good look out for bears.'

There was a slight turn in the hunting luck when on April 16th three bears were seen and two of them secured. April 26th they saw a bear with a cub, but made the mistake of trying to get them with dogs instead of by careful stalking. Two or three fairly good hunting dogs will usually stop a bear on level ice, but not always. In rough ice the rule is that the bear cannot be stopped by dogs, and the danger is also correspondingly greater to the dogs. In this case three dogs were sent after the bear. One of them soon came back, wounded, though not seriously; the other two chased the bear several hours and, although they were able to delay it to some extent, Crawford and Galle never caught up. They could doubtless have shot the bear, but one does not fire at a great distance when bear and dogs are almost in line and when each dog is worth ten times as much as the bear.

The method of hunting bears with dogs is inherited from the old Eskimo period when no other way was feasible, the weapons being bows and arrows. Even with the most powerful modern rifles some Eskimos still use dogs. This seems especially true in eastern North America and in Greenland, where the arctic explorers have usually followed the Eskimo custom. It has been the experience of my expeditions that any average hunter can secure bears better without dogs than with them.

After a detailed account of the bear hunt, Knight closes the entry: 'After six hours the hunters returned stating that the bear had kept on going regardless of the dogs. They saw several fairly fresh bear tracks, but the going was nearly impossible, for often they sank to their waists, and to their knees at nearly every step. Fed the last of the bear meat, and

unless another bear appears soon shall have to start cooking again.'

April on Wrangel Island was stormy and snowy. Still, it was spring. On the 28th the temperature rose to 40° F. in the shade, or eight degrees above freezing. Parts of the land occasionally became bare through thawing, but were covered again by the frequent snowfalls that are typical of an arctic April if you are on a sea-coast or on a small island.

On April 29th Galle went for a short trip inland from which he returned in two days. 'He camped the first night in the hills in a snowhouse after climbing a peak 1,950 feet high [by aneroid barometer]. He was unable to see very far to the north because of a ridge farther on. He then went to the other camp, where he found the tent slightly damaged by a bear, which had made a hole in the roof of the storm shed. In two different places he found where a female bear had given birth to cubs. Saw a few bear and fox tracks, also several snow buntings.'

About the middle of May the weather had become so persistently warm that the winter camp was untenable any longer. It was leaking and the surroundings had become boggy. On May 18th they pitched a tent about a hundred yards away and moved to it. Such a camp as they had lived in is suitable only for extremely cold weather. It was a relief to get into tents.

On May 25th, 'shortly after breakfast a large bunch of geese flew up the river bottom near our camp from the south and landed on a bare spot . . . all day we have heard [other] geese without seeing them. In the afternoon two seals were seen on the ice and Crawford started for them, but they went down long before he got near them. He hid near one of the holes for a long period, but a cold breeze arose, keeping the seals down in the water.'

From this time on the spring and summer was enlivened by great numbers of birds of various sorts. Seals, too, were basking on top of the ice in every direction from camp nearly every day, and the party began to practice what the Eskimos

call the 'crawling method' of hunting. This is simple in theory, but a little difficult in practice and requires unlimited patience. Patience, indeed, is the chief qualification. That is the probable explanation of why Maurer soon developed into an excellent 'crawling' hunter and remained the best of the four at that method of sealing. There seems to have been little difference between the four hunters in their success with polar bears.

Essentially, the crawling method of sealing depends on the assumption that you cannot get within range of a basking seal without his seeing you, and that when he does see you your success will have to depend on your ability to convince him that he is looking at something which is not dangerous. The easiest, and practically the only way, of doing that is to pretend that you yourself are a seal. For that purpose the hunter should be dressed in dark clothing and should begin crawling snake fashion while he is still so far away that the seal cannot see him — say three or four hundred yards. The seal on first climbing out on the ice spends anything from a few minutes to an hour in looking about for a possible bear.

When he has made up his mind that no bears are near, he begins to take naps. But he does not dare to take long ones. I have frequently timed the waking and sleeping intervals of seals for hours, and have found that they seldom sleep as much as a minute and a half and that the average nap is a good deal less than a minute. At the end of each nap he lifts his head about twelve or eighteen inches, makes a complete survey of the horizon for from five to ten or twenty seconds and then drops to sleep again, perhaps for fifteen seconds, perhaps a minute.

The hunter crawls ahead while the seal is sleeping and stops whenever he wakes up. At something over a hundred yards the seal will see you. He then studies you carefully for several minutes, occasionally lowering his head and pretending to sleep, but really watching intently. During this period you must behave exactly like a seal. After dropping your head on the ice, you should raise it and look around for

several seconds before dropping it on the ice again. It is preferable also to wriggle around as if you were itching and trying to scratch yourself on the ice, for seals are infested with a sort of louse which makes them wriggle and scratch continually. With care and patience you should be able to get within fifteen yards of a seal in two hours. An expert hunter gets at least two out of three, and sometimes three out of four of the seals he goes after.

When within shooting distance you wait till the seal raises his head and put a bullet through his brain. Then you drop your rifle and run as fast as you can, for the seal is lying on an incline of wet, slippery ice. The mere shock of instant death may start him slipping and it happens occasionally that the body will slide into the water and be lost. Sometimes you get there just in time to manage to grasp a flipper as it is disappearing. This sliding of the killed animal is the reason why a shot at a hundred and fifty or two hundred yards is impracticable even for the best marksman. You may kill your seal, but you won't get him. There is enough buoyancy in the lungs and blubber to make him rise, but the original dive will send him twenty or thirty feet diagonally down and he will come up under the ice where you cannot reach him.

Although the practice of this sealing method is a little difficult, the theory of it is so simple that in my expeditions I have several times staked lives on the assumption that a new man can translate the principle into practice in time to avert trouble. I did this first with myself. Having watched the Alaska Eskimos hunting seals by the crawling method and having then listened to their explanations, I concluded I could do it whenever the necessity arose and did not trouble to practise till the necessity did arise. I followed the same plan with others later. In 1917, for instance, we were five hundred miles from the nearest people or supplies when I, who had been doing the hunting, sprained my ankle so badly that I knew I would not be able to walk for a month. Neither of my companions had ever secured a seal by the crawling method and we were in a region where that was

the only practicable way. But we all had confidence in our theories and they bundled me up on the sled (no one on any of my expeditions ever rode instead of walking unless he were ill or injured) and we continued travelling away from home. When the occasion arose, I explained over again to one of the men, Karsten Andersen, how a seal should be approached and killed. He did exactly as he was told and after an hour's crawling got his first seal.¹

I have always maintained that the method can be learned from a book, but I have always added that directions must be followed explicitly and that if the beginner fails it will be because he lacks the patience to follow every rule. A beginner 'takes chances,' the seal discovers that the hunter is not a seal, and dives. It is evident from Knight's diary that the Wrangel party were always in too much of a hurry — they tried to make in one hour an approach that required three. Knight had killed a great many seals on my 1913-1918 expedition, especially in 1918 when he was on the seven-month ice drift with Storkerson two hundred miles north of Alaska, but he had never tried the crawling method. He felt, however, when we discussed this before the Wrangel party sailed that he knew the theory well enough, so he could put it in practice whenever necessary. Impatience was, however, his weak point, and it turned out that the first success in the hunt fell to one of the other men who knew the technique only from Knight's descriptions and mine. I feel sure that Knight understood the source of his failures as well as we do, and that he would have curbed his impatience enough to succeed had the situation been pressing, in his opinion. But here, as always in the diary, we see they felt it didn't matter about any particular hunt or any particular seal — they could always count on succeeding later.

Knight has a typical entry of this spring under date of May 28th. 'After breakfast four seals appeared on the ice, and Crawford, Maurer and Galle each went after one. Crawford fired at too great a distance and his seal went down.

¹ See Chapter L, *The Friendly Arctic*. Mr. Noice gives his version of the same circumstances, pp. 127-218, *With Stefansson in the Arctic*.



DRIFTWOOD ON THE WRANGEL BEACH IN EARLY SPRING.



CRAWFORD AND MAURER CUTTING UP A WALRUS.



BARRELS FILLED WITH SEALS' FAT, AND INFLATED SKIN BAGS THAT WILL LATER BE FILLED WITH OIL, SUMMER 1922.



THE DORY AND THE DOGS, SPRING 1922.

Maurer's and Galle's seals went down [before they had a chance to fire] and they each lay near the holes, but the seals did not return. A fog then arose and all hands returned to camp. While they were away I saw a great many bands of geese flying north. Three bands of ducks flew west. One band, I am sure, were "old squaws," but the others I was unable to determine. A single tern also flew west. I later took a walk up the . . . river and saw the first snipe of the year, a "killdeer," I think. Saw one fresh fox track. A lemming came out of his hole near camp, making the first one of them that we have seen this season. Needless to say, I am still cooking dog feed.'

By the end of May the Wrangel Island summer had come. The maximum in the shade was 52° on the sea-coast, which probably meant that fifteen or twenty miles inland the temperature was around 70° or 75° in the shade.

After nearly a month's failure in sealing, Knight writes on May 30th: 'At last!!! Crawford got a seal while out taking a few soundings through cracks and seal holes. A nice shot at eighty yards. A medium-sized male, not very fat.' After this, success was fairly constant, and during the spring and early summer over forty seals were secured. By now the party seem to have been impressed with the importance of making use of every hunting opportunity and of saving everything they secured. They handled the seals carefully. The first that were caught they skinned by the 'casing' method. These animals have a small head, and the skin is elastic while the body is warm. The skinning is begun at the mouth, and no opening is made with the knife, but the hide is stripped back over the head somewhat as one may pull off a long glove. You now have a bag which may be filled with any liquid. Even in midwinter seal blubber, which looks much like very fat bacon, will gradually try out and the oil will be lost unless it is put into a container. According to good Eskimo custom, the Wrangel party now cut up every seal immediately, removed the blubber from the outside of the body, cut it into strips and put it into the sealskin bags. In this way they saved all the fat. It may be estimated

that forty seals would give from fifteen hundred to two thousand pounds of oil, equivalent in food value to that many pounds of butter or bacon. The meat was also saved, some of it probably by drying, although Knight does not tell us so, the rest by being packed with ice. It did not seem necessary to make any special effort to keep it fresh, for it would be needed for dog feed, and other animals could be relied upon to supply fresh meat in the fall.

Knight's account of the weather the summer of 1922 reads strangely. Either it must have been a very exceptional summer in Wrangel Island or else Wrangel Island has a very exceptional kind of arctic climate. I have been in northern islands of varying size, some the same latitude as Wrangel and others as much as five hundred miles farther north, and in these it has been the rule, as it generally is in the northern hemisphere, that June is warmer than May, and July warmer still. But the Wrangel summer of 1922, the latter part of May was the warmest period of the summer. There were frequent snow squalls in June, and even in July, with the temperature seldom more than ten degrees above freezing, and going down below freezing at night not infrequently. Certainly the season must have been very different from that of 1921, for when the party landed that year they saw only a little snow on the highest of the distant mountains, but in 1922 large patches of snow were constant on the ridges inland.

During the summer the party devoted most of the time to hunting seals, geese and ducks, but they also made several exploratory journeys. On June 28th, for instance, 'Crawford, with one dog to pack his blankets, started west to look for a pass through the mountains. I went a short way with him and saw several seals to the west on the ice.' Evidently Knight was leaving Crawford to tell the story in his own diary, for the only further mention of this inland reconnaissance is under head of July 3rd: 'Maurer got one seal and killed another which slid into its hole. I took a walk to the west and met Crawford coming home. Galle spent the day on the ice and, although he saw several seals, he did not get a shot. While duck hunting at the mouth of the river near

camp I killed another seal in the water with the shotgun, which immediately sank.'

At this time the hunting was going very well. On July 4th 'Maurer got three seals. Galle killed five seals, three of which he secured. Total six seals. . . . As a sealing place this is getting better all the time.'

Between July 7th and 12th Knight made a trip east along the south coast and north along the east coast to the north-east corner of the island, visiting the two camps occupied by the *Karluk* crew in 1914, Rodgers Harbour and Waring Point. Apart from ordinary weathering, he found everything as our men abandoned it. The tents had been left standing at Waring Point, but had naturally collapsed since.

On this journey Knight encountered one of the largest streams of the island, Skeleton River. On the way north he was able to avoid it by an ice bridge just outside the mouth, but when he came back he found that this had melted. Thinking he might find a shallow place somewhere inland, Knight travelled west along the north bank of the stream seven hours, but found no ford. 'Occasionally I tried likely looking places for a crossing and, although I found places that I do not think were more than shoulder deep, the current was so rapid that to keep one's footing was impossible. Finally I decided to swim the river, so, putting my Kodak, films, matches, etc., in a pair of water boots, across we went. I did not put my trusty watch in the water boots. It stopped then and I lost track of the time. After travelling about five hours more through snow, mud and water, I reached the camp site at Rodgers Harbour. Had a sleep and rest, then went to the old trapping camp, had another sleep, and reached home at seven P.M. the evening of July 12th, foot-sore and weary.'

On various other journeys inland the party frequently discovered fossil ivory, occasionally the tusks of mammoth, but more often of walrus.

By the last of July sealing conditions were getting bad. Most of the ice was in constant motion and what was left of

the land floe was covered with puddles of water. Under such conditions the best hunter may be excused for not trying or for failing when he does try. When the entry for July 27th tells us that even so Maurer secured three seals, we realize that not only are they complete masters of the technique of hunting, but also that the period of overconfidence is past. They are now taking advantage of their opportunities; there is not the former easy assurance that game will turn up whenever it is needed. Still, they are by no means obsessed with the necessity for hunting, for the entry of July 29th relates that Maurer hunted and killed three seals while Crawford made a journey west along the coast to take soundings in Doubtful Harbour and apparently to make a survey of the coast. This was quite as it should be, for the best judge of arctic conditions would have seen nothing serious in the situation of the party at this time. The survey of Doubtful Harbour showed that ships could enter drawing four fathoms or more and that the shelter was good from all winds but westerly.

In a letter to his parents Knight says 'All along through July we got seals galore, Maurer and Galle being the sealers. Crawford spent a large part of his time travelling up in the mountain doing geological work and, as I was the only one who knew how to make seal pokes and care for the skins, I stayed in camp and did that work. Up where I was before [i.e. on his journeys of 1915-19] the making of pokes is the women's job, but this female of ours was brought up in a mission so she knows nothing of that work. We got altogether about forty seals and have [saved in addition to what has been used from day to day] over a thousand pounds of blubber against next winter if the ship does not come.'

On August 9th Crawford, Galle and Maurer set out on another exploratory journey along the coast to the east and north. Before they left walrus had been seen occasionally, but the ice conditions had not been suitable for pursuing them. The day they started was foggy, and Knight could hear a large number of walrus snorting off to seaward somewhere, but was unable to see them. The next day the walrus

were also about, and a large,¹ fat bear walked into camp to be killed by Knight with one shot. The party returned in four days, having gone no farther than Skeleton River. Apparently the main purpose was a geological reconnaissance, and they turned back largely because of the continual rains.

August 16th 'a large bear was seen on the ice offshore from camp and it took to the water, coming in towards camp. We lined up along the beach and killed it. A large, very fat bear.'

The 17th was 'the finest day we have had for a long time. The sun actually shone for several consecutive hours, with a dead calm.' The summer up to this time had been almost continually foggy and rainy, with sleet not infrequently and snow occasionally. There is no complete weather record, but on August 11th Knight mentions, for instance, 'When I arose the ground was covered with about two inches of snow, which soon melted.' He evidently found it a very strange summer, having experienced among the eastern islands so much more sunshine and warmth at the corresponding season even several hundred miles farther north.

The hunting at this stage was generally successful, although the amount of game was not large. But spells of bad luck are inevitable in hunting, and on August 20th 'a large bear was spotted about a mile to the west on the beach coming this way. Crawford, Maurer and Galle set out intending to hide near the other side of the river and wait for him to come up. But the bear started up the west side of the river and Crawford and Galle took after him. The bear saw them and the last we saw of him was a white streak going north.'

It was now that the lack of the Eskimo skin boat (umiak) began to be felt. August 29th was 'a beautiful day, but cold. . . . A great many walrus heard off-shore, but too far away to

¹ A bear called 'large' in Knight's diary may be taken to have had a live weight of from seven hundred to twelve hundred pounds or more. One said to be 'fat' (as well as large) would give from fifty to one hundred pounds of clear fat that could be peeled off the outside of the body and saved by storage in a sealskin bag — besides an equal amount of fat here and there that would be eaten as a part of the meat when it was cooked.

be seen and too far to go after because of the ice.' This ice, which was insuperable to men with a dory, would have been almost an advantage to the same party equipped with a light, stronger, more portable but equally seaworthy umiak. During the next two or three days the walrus were continually heard snorting, but were usually either beyond the horizon or hidden by the ice.

On September 2nd 'about six P.M. two walrus were seen on a small cake of ice about a mile south-east of camp. All hands with the dory went after them and we landed on a large cake about one hundred and fifty yards north-west of them. I stayed with the dory while the others sneaked up. All three fired nearly together, killing two. . . . Galle was then sent home for an axe, lantern, etc., as darkness was coming on. . . . Had just finished the large walrus when Galle returned to a cake as near as he could get to us, perhaps two hundred yards.'

Then follows a long description of the difficulties they had with the heavy boat and the slowly shifting ice cakes which occasionally met so that one could step across and then separated, leaving water channels between. Again they were greatly handicapped by the clumsy dory, which was so heavy that they could not lift it out to drag over the ice. Long after dark they got to camp with, apparently, two or three hundred pounds of meat. The next day the ice was still in approximately the same place. After a great deal of hard labour they were able to get most of the meat ashore. That day they used the sledge, hauled by man power, for moving the meat from one to another of the small, milling ice floes. At one time the sledge, with about three hundred pounds of meat, was upset, and all but fifty pounds of the load spilled into the water. Knight is not very clear as to the total amount secured, but he mentions that he estimated one of the loads at six hundred pounds, 'although Crawford does not think it was so much.' It seems they may have saved anything from half a ton to a ton of meat and fat.

Scattered through the next several entries there are references to the snorting walrus that could not be seen. There



'TRACKING' UMIK WITH DOGS ALONG SEA BEACH IN CALM WEATHER.



HAULING AN UMIK ON A SLED.



CONVERTING A SLED INTO A BOAT BY WRAPPING IT IN A TARPAULIN.



CROSSING LEAD IN SLED RAFT MADE BY STRETCHING WATERPROOFED CANVAS ABOUT SLED
AND LASHING IT TO SIDES.

is no complaint about these being unreachable because of the weight of the dory; but, to one familiar with the conditions, that situation is obvious.

During my difficulties in financing the relief operations the summer of 1922 I worried that the sea might be open near Wrangel Island and that the boys might be sitting on the highest hill-tops watching day after day for a ship that never came. I thought that under such conditions they might feel heartbroken through a neglect which they could not understand. Up to the time when the ship sailed from Alaska I was, therefore, hoping that a blockade of ice would, in their minds, shift the blame from us who were careless or had failed. That seems to have been actually the case. During the summer proper there is no mention in Knight's diary of the expectation of a ship or of worry because it did not come. Far beyond their horizon and unknown to them the *Teddy Bear* had been trying for three weeks to reach the island when Knight wrote (September 18th): 'All hands have about given up hopes for a ship this year and we intend to move west a short way soon. The wood for two miles or more on each side of us is exhausted and it is easier to move camp to the wood than to haul wood all next winter a long distance to camp.'¹

September 20th they began making active preparations for the second winter. 'Crawford and I went to the west to the first harbour mouth two and a half miles distant to pick a camp site. Wood is plentiful, and a great deal of it can be hauled with the dory before the freeze-up.'

¹ If the reader is following this as a student rather than because of the story, he would do well to examine at this point Captain Bernard's report of the voyage of the *Teddy Bear* which is printed in the Appendix, *post*.

THE SECOND WINTER AND THE TRAGIC END

WHEN the ship had been given up for the year, the party discussed not only the mere plans for wintering, but also other plans which concerned the general purpose of their work. We had agreed, while planning the expedition, that during the second winter they were to decide, on the basis of what they had learned and how they felt, whether they would all remain on the island until the second season of navigation (summer of 1923). We had assumed that a ship was certain to get to them the second year, both because it seemed unlikely that Wrangel would be blocked by ice two years in succession, and also because the general plan which did not insist on a ship being sent the first year made it necessary that one should go the second, for by then the island would have been occupied long enough to satisfy the legal or main purpose of the expedition. By then also it might be presumed that even such enthusiasts as Knight and Maurer (and certainly the two younger members) would be very eager for news and for contact with the outside world. Furthermore, we had felt that if there were difficulty in raising funds for a ship the first year, that same difficulty would certainly not hold the second year, for the very fact that the party had been isolated for two years would create public sympathy for their situation. Whether this was sound reasoning on our part does not really matter. The point is that it was reasoning upon which we had all agreed and upon which the Wrangel party were compelled to base their actions now, since they had received in the meantime no news whatever from the outside world.

Accordingly, we have quite logically Knight's entry for September 22nd: 'Crawford and I are starting to figure on a trip across the ice to Siberia next spring and thence to the nearest wireless station, very likely Nome, but possibly Anadyr Bay, south of East Cape. We have only five dogs, but good ones, and a rather rickety sled which I intend to overhaul as soon as we move to our new winter camp. We

will have another opportunity to demonstrate "living off the country," which has never failed yet as far as the Stefansson expeditions are concerned.¹

The same situation is stated in a letter addressed to me by Allan Crawford, which is the only record of the same plan that has been saved from the general tragic destruction. Crawford's letter is dated January 7th, 1923, just before he and Knight started on the journey towards the mainland which had been planned in Knight's entry of September 22nd. The paragraph referring to the plans is as follows: 'My decision to leave here [Wrangel Island] was made last year with advice of Knight and on consideration of orders received from you [Stefansson] and the desirability of giving you news. In fact, as early as last spring [1922] I considered it.' This means that the plan had been in the minds if not on the lips of the party four or five months before Knight recorded it in his diary, and therefore eight or nine months before it was carried out. Indeed (as said above), this had really been provided for before they sailed in 1921.

It would not be necessary to emphasize at this point that the winter journey was planned during the preceding spring and summer were it not for the impression widely circulated through newspapers, and therefore conceivably present in the minds of some readers, that the journey had been undertaken on the spur of the moment under the pressure of starvation and for the purpose of making a desperate attempt to secure supplies from the mainland that might be hauled back to the members of the party remaining behind on Wrangel Island. Mr. Noice, whose newspaper version of the Wrangel tragedy was responsible for this wrong impression, has specifically retracted these allegations — see his signed statement, *ante*. The complete record now shows that the journey which resulted so tragically was planned in detail while there was as yet no thought of shortage and would have been carried out no less had there been the greatest

¹ For a statement of how Galle first heard of these plans, and what he thought of them, see Appendix I.

abundance of food on Wrangel Island at the time pre-arranged for starting.¹

Another unfounded but widely circulated newspaper rumour is to the effect that Knight's diary shows that the ice south of Wrangel moved away in October and that the party then revived their expectation of a ship coming in, the critics going on to say that Captain Bernard could have reached the island and was blameworthy because he quit trying too soon. Knight does mention open water but there is nothing to indicate that he supposed it reached far enough from Wrangel to enable a ship to come in. On the contrary, it is clear from the diary that the expectation of a ship was given up in September and never revived. It has, therefore, been most unfair to allege that there is in Knight's diary basis for criticizing Captain Bernard for having given up too soon his attempt to reach the island with the *Teddy Bear* the summer of 1922. (See Captain Bernard's own report in the appendix.)

The type of winter camp used the previous year had pleased everybody so well that they now decided to construct a similar one at their new wintering place. On September 27th 'all hands proceeded to location of future winter house and erected ridge-pole and split and carried rails for the walls. Also piled wood [to prevent its being covered from sight by drifting snow the next winter].

This was the season corresponding to the first few weeks spent on the island the previous year when bears had been seen in every direction, when there were hundreds of tracks, and when the secure assumption was made that they need not be killed then because they could be picked up later whenever wanted. Now there was plenty of snow on the ground but there is no mention of bears until the sentence October 4th, 'No bear tracks were seen.' October 5th we have, 'This time last year we saw a large number of bears, but, although we keep a good look out for them, now "there

¹ Furthermore it was never at any time contemplated that anyone or anything should be sent back from Siberia to Wrangel by sledge immediately, but only by ship the following summer or by sledge when that summer was over.

hain't none." At present we have about two months' dog feed, and as soon as we are moved and settled Crawford and I will probably take the dogs and go off-shore to a lead and camp there.' That was a good plan, but, like the good plan of camping on the north side of the island, made the previous winter, it was not carried out, and the diary does not tell us why. But the inference, plain between the lines, continues to be that while this precaution was recognized as wise, it was not considered pressingly necessary to carry it out, since other easier ways of getting food would probably develop.

On October 7th Crawford killed a seal and there were a few secured later. Bears were not entirely absent, for tracks were occasionally seen. Ducks continued to be secured by the hunters as late as the middle of October. We have no complete record of how many were shot during the summer, but there must have been several hundred ducks and geese. A note on a scrap of paper left by Milton Galle mentions that one day Knight killed thirty ducks and Crawford one — a fact nowhere recorded in Knight's diary.

October 12th Knight says, 'We have been living for some time on walrus skin, and a feed of seal meat would be most welcome; but it seems not to be.' Boiled walrus hide is considered by the Eskimos a great delicacy — generally much preferred to the meat. Those of us who live in the North by hunting usually come to have tastes agreeing with those of the Eskimos, and that was evidently the way with Knight and the rest, for in another entry we read, 'For the last week or so we have been eating the flippers and skin of the two walrus killed some time ago, and mighty good eating it is, too.' Evidently both the walrus and the seal meat were preferred to ducks, for they are complaining about not having seal meat at a time when they were securing numerous ducks.

On October 14th hunting conditions seemed to be improving a little. One seal was killed and there were the fresh tracks of two bears. Occasional tracks were seen later, but the hunting luck continued bad. October 20th: 'Early this morning the dogs set up a howl and Crawford and I rushed out. A bear was running rapidly off-shore about two hundred

yards away. The lead had opened during the night so that the bear would undoubtedly swim it, and the weather was bad, so we let it go. Later I went out on the ice and found that it was, by the tracks, a rather large animal. It had retreated over the tracks that it made before it became frightened. Crawford set the crab net last night and hauled it up this morning. He found nothing but about a quart of shrimps on the bait. The shrimps are very small and when boiled nearly tasteless.'

October 23rd: 'A bear had been to the other camp and had sniffed about. Another bear had been to within two hundred yards of our camp during yesterday's blow.' And on October 25th: 'Everything comes to him who waits, or goes after it. At seven A.M. the dogs set up a howl. Crawford rushed out, and about a hundred feet west of the tents stood a female bear and two cubs. Crawford, in seven shots, killed them. The cubs proved to be yearlings.'

Evidently there were more plans and preparations for the trip to the mainland than Knight sets down. On November 1st he says: 'For a long time I have said nothing about our seamstress. She is very quiet and rather downhearted over the fact that the ship did not show up, but she keeps busy and is at present making a pair of fancy moosehide mittens, probably for Crawford. There is considerable clothing to be made for Crawford and me if we go to Siberia. . . . Crawford and I have just about made up our minds to make the trip, and the time of starting depends on several things — ice conditions, dog feed, weather, etc., but we are hoping to get started about January 15th, 1923. We think that if the weather is good and going on the ice not too bad, Nome should be reached in sixty or seventy days, for we have about made up our minds to go to Nome instead of Anadyr Bay. We have thought that Stefansson might be wintering on the mainland south of us, and I think that if he is we will see him [that he will arrive at Wrangel] by January 1st. If he should not come till later, we will have to take a chance and go, for very likely if he is wintering on the mainland we will

hear of him and his ship and will go there. If one can go by hunches, my hunch tells me that Stefansson did not come north this summer and that we are doing the right thing in making the trip.'

Unlike the previous year, there was enough snowfall during the autumn of 1922, but it was so windy that much of the ground, nevertheless, remained bare and unfit for sledging, so that it was not until early in November that the business of moving camp from the old site to the new was completed. So far as housing is concerned, this seems to have been the only uncomfortable period on the island. They were still tenting on the old camp site and did not build an outer house over the tents because they were each day expecting that they could move to-morrow.

Every other day or so there is mention of a sledge load of provisions or equipment being hauled from the old camp to the new, but we are not told the exact quantity. The only hint is that on November 12th 'We have twenty-six boxes of hard bread left and about three weeks of dog feed. A large amount of seal oil left.' Apparently by dog feed is meant the half-decayed meat left from last summer. By the large amount of seal oil Knight probably means about a ton, for that is the quantity that would result from the number of seals and bears killed up to autumn. There must have been a good many other items of food. There is a common arctic custom, apparently originated by the Eskimos, but followed by many whites, to state food supplies in terms of the one item that is considered the staple. Ordinarily an Eskimo will tell you that he has so many sacks of flour. If the statement is unmodified, it means that in addition he has fifteen or twenty other items of groceries in proportions that are generally understood. It is as if a farmer were to mention having three hundred acres of land, from which other farmers conversant with the general conditions could form an approximate idea of the horses, machinery, and other gear that would appropriately belong to such a farm.

On November 16th the moving from the old camp to the new was at last completed except for 'some things which will

be left until next summer. The dory is still there. There are a few scraps of skins and bones which might come in handy later in the winter [for dog feed] which I intend to gather up and haul to-morrow. There have been no signs of open water for some time, and unless a bear comes along the dog feed will be getting scarce.'

On November 23rd we are told it was 'much warmer than it has been for quite a spell,' which is instructive, for when you glance back over the thermometer readings for the autumn you find that only one day had been equally cold and most others conspicuously warmer when recorded instrumentally. This is a perhaps unneeded confirmation of the well-known fact that cold as felt by us and 'real' cold as shown by instruments often differ widely. The maximum this day was three degrees below zero and the minimum twenty below.

The entries during the latter half of November and early December are generally repetitions of three items. Trapping was going on energetically and a fox was caught every now and then; bear tracks were occasionally seen, but no bears were secured; the seamstress was 'busy making skin clothing for Crawford and me' for the proposed trip to Nome.

On November 29th Knight says: 'Feeding the dogs with bear skin and blubber,' from which it is probable that the people themselves had only fresh meat ahead for a week or two and were once more beginning to live in considerable part on groceries — although this is not mentioned. The diary contains no thermometer records after the beginning of December, but we gather that the weather was warmer with more snow falling. During November Knight frequently complains of the lack of snow which made sledging difficult, but these complaints disappear in December. On the 5th it was warm and there was a slight fall of rain, probably about two or three degrees above freezing, which is not a very rare occurrence in the Arctic where one may expect a slight thaw once or twice in each midwinter, no matter what part of the Arctic it is.

To those familiar with the 'inside stories' of many arctic

and antarctic expeditions, one of the most remarkable and creditable things about the Wrangel Island story is that in a diary obviously frank, even to a fault, there are no disagreements or recriminations after the first few days on the island. In the account of the voyage from Nome to Wrangel Knight mentions that Galle was not doing his full share of the work, but later he explains that this was due to sea-sickness. A few days after landing (September 25th, 1921) we are told, 'there seems to be some friction between Maurer and Galle, but I will do my best to ease matters between them, for a small party like this should run smoothly.' Evidently this was smoothed over, for there is not a word later of trouble between any of the four men nor any suggestion that they disagreed on policy. Neither is there a hint that Knight thought any of the others were doing less than their share of the work or striving less faithfully for the success of the party. There are some entries the first year to the effect that the Eskimo woman was gloomy and not doing her sewing as rapidly as other Eskimo women with whom Knight was familiar. But the tenor of these comments changes the second year, and the farther the diary goes the more frequent are the grateful and even enthusiastic comments upon Ada Blackjack's improvement, both in the work she did and in her cheerfulness while doing it. On December 12th, 1922, for instance, Knight says: 'The woman is doing wonderful work and is a great deal better than a year ago.' By then she had almost finished a clothing outfit for Crawford and Knight for their proposed journey to Nome, and they were evidently very well satisfied with it.

As December advanced bear tracks were frequently seen, but the bears themselves were more elusive than ever. This is partly explained by numerous entries of 'cloudy,' 'cloudy and warm,' etc. At 72° North Latitude, it is only on a cloudless day that there is light enough at this time of year for reading or shooting for four or five hours around noon.

In the entry for Christmas Eve we have the first, and only an indirect suggestion that the party felt a danger of provisions running short. 'We are celebrating by having an

extra hard bread or so apiece. The snow roof was completed to-day, and it is nice and comfortable in here to-night.' Other entries explain that the long delay in completing the outer house was due to the absence of suitable snow in the vicinity of the camp. They could have hauled snow blocks from a distance on the sledge, but apparently the discomfort of an uncovered tent did not seem to them to justify the bother.

We have incorporated into the story in full every mention contained in the diary that relates in any way to the proposed trip to Nome. On December 25th the subject comes up again. 'I finished the complete set of dog harness for the trip and Crawford is busy making ridge-pole and uprights for the tent' — doubtless the tent which they intended to carry with them to use if they had to camp where there was insufficient snow for building a snowhouse. The next day, 'Crawford working on the tent and I brought the sled indoors and made several repairs on it. Hope to finish it to-morrow. Snowing hard, so the trappers stayed in camp to-day.' Before that time the diary tells us almost every day that two or three of the boys were out tending traps. Sometimes they came in with foxes and sometimes only with the reports of bear tracks and fox tracks seen.

Now, we are impressed again, and more strongly than ever, with the temperamental optimism of the party. Food was running so short that, as we shall presently see, they were considering the dog feed problem as a new and important additional reason for starting soon on the proposed journey to Nome. At this time of year the sun is so far below the horizon even at noon that on a cloudy day it is almost impossible to see a polar bear till he is on top of you. Indeed, a bear is hard to make out against a snow background on a cloudy day even in spring with the sun high in the sky behind the clouds. But on clear, moonlit nights you can see a bear plainly at half a mile, and for that reason you could stand watch for them at night and secure any that came in good weather. Yet we have in Knight's diary what seems at first glance a puzzling combination of two opposed facts: they wanted to get bears, yet they never stood watch for

them and always learned of their presence in one of three ways – by some one going out accidentally and seeing one, by the dogs ‘raising a bear howl,’ or by tracks in the snow next morning. The explanation, as always, is optimism. Knight in his past experience with Storkerson and me had so often seen provisions dwindle to a few pounds that he could not see any great cause for worry when there were a few hundred pounds still on hand. In general his feelings were evidently shared by the rest, although they recognized the food shortage as one more reason why the trip to Nome should be made, and soon – to transfer two of the men, and especially the dogs, to Siberia and later to Alaska where food would be abundant. The three on the island with no dogs, could then get along by securing less than a third of the game needed for five people and five dogs.

On December 27th: ‘The sled and tent in good shape and all that is left for us to do is to get our outfit together. We would like to get started soon, but the ground is covered with about six inches of floury snow and we intend to wait for a blow to pack it.’

December 31st, after weather that had usually been good for two months, we have ‘a howling gale from the east. As Crawford was building a fire this morning the dogs set up a howl and Crawford rushed out, but it was impossible to see more than a foot or two. The dogs soon quieted down and so whatever it was in camp did not stay long. Hard luck. Snow drifting as hard as can be imagined.’ This gale continued the first three days of 1923. ‘Blowing a howling gale. . . . Part of the north wall [of the outer house] blew away and some snow drifted in [between the house wall and the outside of the tent], but did no damage. The wind on the afternoon of January 3rd nearly died down and it is now cloudy.’

January 4th we have the next mention of the trip. ‘I have been busy packing up to-day, as we hope to get away in a day or two.’ January 7th: ‘Crawford and I spent the day getting ready, loading the sled, getting things together, etc. Maurer and Galle to their traps. Maurer got a fox and saw several tracks.’

We had discussed before the party left Seattle the possibility that if I were able to convert the British or Canadian government to our views I might take charge of an expedition on their behalf attempting to penetrate the unexplored area north of Wrangel Island. Several of Knight's diary entries show that he and Crawford had these tentative plans in mind and feared that on their way to Nome they might miss either a ship on which I was wintering among the ice or a sledge party from such a ship with which I might be on my way to Wrangel Island. Accordingly, they wrote letters to leave behind them, intended mainly to give me their point of view about certain important questions, in case I arrived after they left. They had in mind also, as we always do on sledge journeys over the treacherous sea ice, the possibility of accident to themselves. Crawford's letter is the longer. It is also more pessimistic about the resources of Wrangel Island. This was perhaps natural, for he was comparing it with theoretical expectations while Knight compared it with other arctic islands which he had known.

WRANGEL ISLAND,
January 7th, 1923.

DEAR MR. STEFANSSON, —

In case you should have wintered near the island or that Knight and I meet with misfortune, I am leaving this letter with Maurer whom I have left in charge.

You doubtless received copy of proclamation made on this island when we landed.

Maurer can tell you as well as I the nature of the island from his diary. Game is *scarce*. Of minerals I have located none. Fossils a few.

My opinion is that fox trapping would not be profitable on this island without a schooner to get walrus, and that this would entail a large outlay to do this profitably. Maurer knows my ideas on this.

My decision to leave here was made last year with advice of Knight and on consideration of orders received from you and the desirability of giving you news. In fact, as early as last

spring I considered it, and when I saw how sparse seal and bear were I decided it would be unwise to stay here with the dogs all winter. Especially so since trapping is not worth staying for. I have taken my diary with me, my accounts are in my trunk.

We intend to go due south to Siberian coast and thence along the coast to Cape Serdze, Whaling, Diomedes, Nome.

Maurer & Galle are both good workers and have done their best. I would recommend Galle to you especially for the trail.

Ada is not extra as a sewing-woman.

It is hard to say what we shall do if we arrive at Nome and find you are in the north. We will of course follow any advice you may have left. Otherwise we will use our own judgment.

ALLAN RUDYARD CRAWFORD

Knight's letter more than Crawford's has a grave tone of farewell. This may have been partly the result of his knowledge that he was already seriously ill and partly a reflection of the temperamental change which is a symptom of the illness itself.

WRANGEL ISLAND,
January 4th, 1923.

DEAR MR. STEFANSSON,—

Crawford and I are about to start for Nome and I am leaving this letter with Maurer to send to you should anything unforeseen happen to me. Of course I am not afraid of starving to death or freezing (thanks to the things I have been taught by you), but I am well aware that accidents are liable to happen to one in this country as well as on the 'outside.'¹

So if I 'pass my checks,' kindly send whatever remuneration I am entitled to to my mother or father at McMinnville, and rest assured that I am ever grateful for the favours you have shown me, and the opportunities that you have made for me.

I am, Sir,—

Your humble servant,

E. LORNE KNIGHT

¹'The Outside' as used by white people in northern Canada and Alaska refers to the world of railways, cities and newspapers — sometimes also spoken of by Northerners as 'Civilization.'

January 7th, the day on which Crawford wrote his letter, we have in Knight's diary: 'At one A.M. Crawford and I started due south over fine going and making good time. We travelled south an hour and hit broken-up young ice with soft snow in between. The moon is about one-quarter on the wane and it was slightly misty as we went east along the rough ice for two and a half hours. After numerous tip-overs because of increasing darkness, we camped. We are now about six miles east of camp and a mile offshore. Our load is rather heavy and the dogs soft from inaction, so we will go in to the beach to-morrow and travel east along it, watching for an opportunity to go south on good going. We lost one of our two ice picks and a pot lid. Rather a bad start.'

It has seemed strange to some commentators that the party travelled east, for you will see on any map that the farther east you follow the Wrangel shore the farther away you are from Siberia. To one who considers travelling over sea ice dangerous or difficult, the obvious thing would be to go west to where the south-west corner of Wrangel Island is only about a hundred miles from the Siberian coast on which the traders and natives live whom the travellers would desire to reach as soon as convenient. But we must remember that the party was going on Knight's advice. Knight's judgment was necessarily based upon his past experience, and he had travelled in previous years (1915-1919) so many months and so many hundreds of miles over shifting sea ice that it had no special terrors for him. The diary shows that the objective was Siberia only incidentally, and Nome primarily. Travelling east you get nearer and nearer to Nome, though you do get farther from Siberia. He probably thought also that the ice in the straits between Wrangel and Siberia would be the most broken and mobile where the channel is narrowest, and on that basis it is reasonable to go east before crossing.

Knight has said in several places in his diary that they were going by sledge to Alaska - that is the only meaning of his hope that they will reach Nome in sixty or seventy days from the middle of January as he says on November 1st, 1922.

Now Bering Straits are notoriously dangerous to cross in winter and are known to have been crossed by sledge only a few times during the last hundred years — by Eskimos. If I were planning to sledge from Wrangel to Nome I would go east from Wrangel and land at Point Hope. Since Knight's training had been with me, it is not unlikely he had this route in the back of his mind as an alternative one and that may have been why they travelled east whenever they failed to find an easy road south — they would go via Siberia if the south road proved easy, but via Point Hope otherwise. So far as the records go, this is pure theorizing, for Knight never says anything directly to this effect.

Contrary to some other commentators, I find nothing in Knight's expressed plans to disagree with unless it be several days later when they decided to turn back. Even here I would have been in hearty agreement if this had meant discontinuing any attempt to go to Nome or Siberia at all, for I should not have considered the possible gain from such a trip to be worth the effort. But having travelled east, and still keeping in mind the Siberia-Nome programme, they should certainly have struck south of all hazards when their farthest east was reached. Going west again and making a fresh start from the south-west corner of the island would necessarily tire the dogs if it had no other result. As provisions were getting scarce, it was not easy to feed up the dogs to bring them back again to their original strength and freshness. For dog feed, like man food, has to be adequate not only in quantity, but in kind. They seem to have had little for the dogs at this stage except hard bread and seal oil, which will do for a few days as an emergency ration, but will not keep up their strength indefinitely.

The true key to the turning back comes several days later when Knight at last puts on record the symptoms of a developing illness. Then we must all realize that under similar conditions we would have done just what Knight and Crawford did.

We can infer from letters written at this stage by Fred Maurer to his family that he disapproved of the plan to cross

to the mainland, apparently because he thought success unlikely, and that staying on the island was safer.¹ Anyone used to living by hunting in the north would agree as to the safety of staying on the island, but it is not easy to agree about the difficulty of making the journey to the mainland except on the basis which Knight mentions, that the sled was weak and likely to break down under its heavy load in the rough ice. Otherwise both the distance and circumstances of the journey were easier than those of journeys Knight had made over sea ice in previous years. Here we regret what we may admire from other points of view, the laconic character of Knight's diary, seldom mentioning motives and merely recording what was done. We wish he had given us the arguments used pro and con by all the party.

With these comments we will let Knight's diary continue to tell its own story, omitting nothing that has a bearing on the case. But we do omit sentences and even paragraphs here and there when they do not seem pertinent and would mar the directness of the narrative. Doing otherwise would confuse and weary the general reader; while any future historian who cares to make an independent study will naturally use as his sources not this book but the documents themselves which will be available in photostat form in the libraries of the American Geographical Society of New York and the University of Toronto, as well as in other libraries to be selected hereafter.

On January 8th: 'Broke camp at eight-twenty A.M. and travelled until two-thirty P.M., camping because of darkness . . . on the outside of Rodgers Harbour sandpit about one quarter mile west of the old *Karluk* camp and graves. The going all day was wonderful, very little snow and as hard as concrete. The only signs of life seen were some old bear and fox tracks. Our load consists of about seven hundred pounds besides the sled. The food is nearly all pilot bread and seal blubber. There are a few pounds of dried meat for the dogs, and when that is gone I will feed them with four

¹ The letter is discussed farther on in this chapter by John Maurer, Fred's brother.

sealskins that we have along for that purpose. In all we have about thirty days' rations, and by then we should be in Siberia. [A very conservative estimate. Bartlett, of our 1914 party, had made the journey from Wrangel Island to the settlements of Siberia in thirteen days.] Light breeze from the west, clear and very cold.'

With the wisdom that comes so easily after another's plan has miscarried, we see from this entry that a grave mistake had been made in carrying a seven hundred pound load (food for thirty days) when four hundred pounds (food for fifteen days) should have been considered ample for a trip which they knew had been made before in thirteen days. With the lighter load they could have travelled more miles per hour, the men would not have had to harness themselves to help the dogs, and the weak sled would have been safer from breakage, allowing the party to plunge boldly into the rough ice, which they dared not face with the heavier load. A few entries ahead we shall come to Knight's own comments on this error in tactics.

January 9th: 'Did nothing but sleep all day, as both Crawford and I were badly chafed and sore. A rather poor excuse, but the only one we have. Clear, calm and very cold.'

January 10th: 'Broke camp early this morning and again started due south. A short way from the beach we unexpectedly hit soft snow and I had to get in harness with the dogs. About two miles offshore we again came to the edge of the rough ice, which was impossible for the small team and the poor sled that we have. We travelled east about four miles, getting nearer to the shore all the time, and finally camped on the shore side of the pressure ridge due south of Cape Hawaii, about two miles offshore. The going ahead looks very bad, and as we have only five dogs in poor condition and the weather is very cold, it is needless to say that going is very difficult. Unless we get started south soon I am afraid that we will have to go back to the main camp and then west, looking for a way through the rough ice.'

Since we know that both Knight and Crawford knew that sea ice is always roughest near the land, we must conclude

that they considered the rickety sled good enough for the rest of the journey if they could only get past the first few miles of the crushed inshore ice without breakage. They were looking for a gap in the rampart and were not finding it. Under ordinary conditions we do not look for such gaps, but tackle the ice directly ahead, no matter how bad it is, making a road with pickaxes. The alternative frequently employed is to leave the teams behind while men go several miles ahead to reconnoitre, selecting eventually the least difficult route.

January 11th: 'Blowing a light gale from the north-east and drifting snow. Stayed in camp. Cold and clear.'

January 12th: 'Broke camp at nine-thirty A.M. and travelled until eleven-thirty. We first went south to the pressure ridge and from the top of it saw smooth ice running east and west. We made a road through several hundred feet of rubble and got to the smooth ice and found it to be a lead that had opened up yesterday. It was covered with young [unsafe] ice and drifted snow, although it had looked like solid ice to us when we started for it. The going to the east is practically impossible for five dogs and a weak sled, so we decided to get back to solid ice and camp. Built a snow wall and put a tarpaulin over it [a sort of camp intermediate in comfort between a snowhouse, which is better, and a tent, which is much worse]. Both primus stoves are out of order and Crawford worked with them for several hours, at last getting one of them working after a fashion. There does not seem to be a chance to get to the mainland now from here and Crawford and I have been racking our brains on the best thing to do. Matters now stand thus: We have only five dogs, a weak sled, and not a great deal of provisions, and the ice is so bad that we cannot travel to sea to get to open water' [for sealing to replenish the travelling food supplies].

Then we have at last the tragic key to the otherwise inexplicable fact that they did not strike boldly south into the rough ice. Knight was weak with a serious illness. 'I am nearly all in. (I hate to admit this, but I am sure I can't help it). My scurvy has been coming back for the last month or two, although I have said nothing to any one about it except



CRAWFORD WITH A BLOCK OF SNOW HE HAS JUST CUT FOR THE HOUSE BEING BUILT BY KNIGHT.



KNIGHT BUILDING SNOWHOUSE.



THE FINISHED SNOWHOUSE.



CRAWFORD SETTING OUT FOR A TRAMP THROUGH THE
INTERIOR OF WRANGEL ISLAND, SUMMER OF 1922.



FRED MAURER EQUIPPED FOR HUNTING—WRANGEL
ISLAND, SPRING OF 1914.

Crawford. When we started I was in hopes of fairly good going and a chance to get fresh meat, but I find that my legs go back on me in this rough ice where I am forced to get in harness to help the dogs. When we do get in rough ice the dogs can hardly haul the load on account of the temperature, which is very low,¹ and I am afraid of the sled, which is none too strong. Our gait on level ice is about two and a half miles per hour.'

January 12th we get the first comment from Knight on the mistake in outfitting which we pointed out (*ante*) in connection with the entry of January 8th. 'This is what we have planned to do. We will go back to camp and lighten the sled load as much as possible [so as to increase travelling speed and decrease the danger of breaking the sled] and Crawford and Galle will start south and make as much time as they possibly can. It will be impossible for all of us to stay at the main camp, for there is just enough grub there for three people (hard bread, blubber and what foxes are caught) to last until the seals and birds come. I would like to make this trip, but I really do not feel able. This is just a rough outline of our plans; more later. Crawford has several of his fingertips frozen badly and they give him considerable pain, but nothing serious. A fairly fresh bear track seen going east.'

January 13th: 'Did not move to-day. Crawford took a walk out to the lead, but no chance for sealing. Cloudy, misty, light breeze from the east.'

January 14th: 'Stayed in camp. Blowing a fresh breeze from the west. Cloudy.'

January 15th: 'Broke camp at nine A.M. and started ashore, bound for the main camp. About half a mile offshore a gale with drifting snow from the north hit us in the face and was extremely unpleasant. We got to the beach and started west, but the wind shifted to north-west nearly in our faces. Travelled until about twelve-thirty through very soft snow, making poor time, and the wind became so bad that we decided to go ashore and camp. Crawford and I each froze our

¹The colder the weather the greater the friction of the sledge shoeing against the snow. At 50° below zero the snow grates like dry sand.

faces badly, and, as I am rather unwell, I think I felt the cold more than I ordinarily would. We hoped to make home to-morrow, and at least as far as the cross west of Rodgers Harbour to-day, but —! This is the first blow we have had all the year from the west, and, naturally, it had to come as we were going home in a hurry. Oh, well!

On January 16th and 17th there was no travelling because of a stiff head wind. Their camp had been improperly built, and, accordingly, on January 18th, 'we decided to erect a snow ring and cover it with the tent and tarpaulin. Now we are nice and warm and swilling tea like a couple of Englishmen. Feeding the dogs with a sealskin and with blubber.'

Knight does not say how much sealskin he gave the dogs, but, as to quality, the ration was no worse than if it had been lean meat and fat. Most Eskimos consider the skin rather a luxury when compared to meat and seldom eat it simply because it has a greater value for clothing. From the dietetic point of view the skin is largely protein and, therefore, with fat, makes a complete or balanced ration. The ordinary European prejudice against eating skin has nothing to do with the chemistry of the food and, consequently, nothing to do with its nutritive effect on dogs, for they have no prejudices against it.

Fresh skin of seal or walrus is seldom used for dog feed by the Eskimos because it is too valuable for clothing, boat-making, etc., and also because the people are so fond of using it. But explorers who are wealthy enough to purchase skin for dog feed, have sometimes done so — for example, Knud Rasmussen, who used walrus hide as the main dog ration on his great journey across North Greenland in 1912.

In his whole diary Knight comments only twice upon food as being exceptionally good — in one case owls and in the other boiled skin. Both these comments were written when abundant supplies of other things were as yet on hand.

January 19th: 'Broke camp at nine-forty-five A.M. . . . and camped about two miles east of last winter's trapping camp.

Crawford froze the big toe on his right foot rather badly to-day and is suffering considerable pain. Wet socks, I think. Careless. All day we faced a light breeze and very cold. Various frost bites. My scurvy pains were very pronounced to-day and part of the time it was painful walking. The only thing fresh that we have which I could use as an antiscorbutic is sour seal oil, and I have eaten all that I could hold every day for some time, but no signs of relief yet. Both of my heels have deep cracks in them, which makes walking painful. Of all the trips I have ever participated in, long or short, this one is the worst for hard luck; or is it incompetence?

We can now answer Knight's last question in the negative. Apart from asking why they started out at all when they were afraid of facing the rough ice because the sled was too heavily loaded and therefore likely to break — apart from such criticism, easy only after the event, it is difficult to see how anyone would have been likely beforehand to do more than perhaps disagree, as people always do on matters of policy. Incompetence is far too harsh a word, and in any case not the one needed to describe the serious mistake Knight was making in thinking that sour seal oil was an antiscorbutic. I am unable to guess where he got that idea, for in my treatment of Knight himself when he had scurvy in 1917 and when the cure was almost magical in its rapidity, we used only fresh meat. In our many discussions afterwards, I do not remember it ever having been suggested that seal oil, fermented by the Eskimo method and palatable to us who are used to it, is of antiscorbutic value. Probably Knight had read when he was home some popular article saying that certain animal oils are rich in vitamins and also that vitamins cure scurvy. Popular articles frequently are loosely worded, for they are written not so much to give sound information as to create in the reader a comfortable feeling of being well informed. That is a harmless deception, perhaps, to play on the reader in ordinary circumstances. But what a man like Knight with his life at stake needs to be told is that while oils do contain certain vitamins,

they are unlikely to contain that particular vitamin called 'C,' which cures scurvy.¹

January 20th: 'Home again. Broke camp at eight A.M. and arrived at twelve-forty-five, finding the three people comfortably living in the large ten by twelve tent. They have only caught one fox since we left and Maurer did that. Saw several old tracks of foxes to-day and one or two new ones. No bear tracks. Very cold and clear. Wonderful going. Saw the sun to-day' [its first appearance after the mid-winter twilight].

On January 21st: 'The woman is busy making clothing. It has been decided that Crawford, Maurer and Galle will attempt in a few days to go to Nome via Siberia. I will remain here as camp keeper for the reason that I think I would be unwise to attempt the said trip [because of illness]. See my entry for January 12th. The only objection to this plan as far as I am concerned is that I will be left alone with the native woman. But one of the things about this country is that circumstances sometimes demand actions that would be reprehensible "on the outside." I am sure that anyone looking at this case clearly will see that there is nothing else to be done. It is impossible for two men to make the trip, I think, with only five dogs, and as grub is short here, it is essential for the party to split. It is very likely that Stefansson will be expecting news from us this spring, for when we left him in Seattle in August, 1921, he suggested the trip. The woman and I will have about six hard bread each a day until the seals and birds arrive. This is not counting what foxes I hope to catch on the two trap lines that I intend to take over, or perhaps a bear. We will also have about five hundred pounds of seal fat and five or six gallons of bear oil. Although we realized that it was very cold on our short trip, I was surprised last night it dropped to -51° . The sun came all the way above the horizon to-day.'

¹ This paragraph may be in general correct, but after it was printed I have re-read all Knight says about seal oil as an antiscorbutic and have come to feel that perhaps he did not have real faith in it but merely thought of it as the one thing they had which *might* have curative value. This is the interpretation of the entries that is favoured by his family.

Applying some more of the easy wisdom which comes when the battle is over, we can write here a good deal of pertinent comment on Knight's entry and on the plans which were carried out. Had the main consideration been safety, instead of the desire to communicate with me, the whole party should have remained on the island, most of them going on short rations while the hunting daylight was scanty, but allowing sufficient for hunting strength to one or two of the most active. In the last extremity the five dogs might have been killed, although we know how repugnant that would have been especially to Knight and Maurer, who had often sailed close to the wind on previous expeditions without ever being compelled to sacrifice a dog. The food supply which Knight mentioned would have taken the people of the party, on such short rations as are common enough in polar exploration, into the good hunting period, as we know both from our general arctic experience and from information about the following spring given by Ada Blackjack. But the safety of the dogs was evidently much in their minds. To Knight and Maurer this was part of the tradition of our various expeditions, for we have never killed dogs to save provisions. There is a personal love, too, between each dog and his human companions. It is possible that the final tragedy of the Wrangel party was due chiefly to their desire to save their dogs. Certainly they were much in Crawford's mind, as we know from his letter (quoted *ante*) in which he says: 'As early as last spring I considered it [leaving Wrangel Island by sledge the winter 1922-3] and when I saw how sparse seal and bear were I decided it would be unwise to stay here with the dogs all winter.'

The crucial thing seems to have been Knight's faith in sour seal oil as an antiscorbutic. Apart from that, he would have realized that his disease would progress and that the only safety would be in having at least one able hunter to go out when spring came to get fresh meat for the same sort of cure which we had worked on Knight himself when he had scurvy in 1917. Of course, every one thought at this time that the journey to Siberia would almost certainly prove successful

after the sledge load had been lightened so as to make it practicable to go directly south through the rough ice. Such success could have no bearing on Knight's own safety, however, for there is no mention or suggestion anywhere that the party bound for the south had any intention of returning from Siberia, or of returning that winter at all. Every mention says simply that they were going by way of Siberia to Nome, which is nearly a thousand miles by the route they would travel. They could not get to Nome except so late that the only means of return travel is by ship, and in an ordinary season no ship can reach Wrangel Island before July or more likely August. That would be too late for bringing remedies to a man already sick with scurvy in January, and Knight understood that well.

Evidently (as we shall see from later entries) Knight expected the cure to be worked either by the seal oil or the foxes and polar bears which he would secure before he got too weak. We have in the diary no record of disagreement on this point by any member of the party. Our only knowledge of that is from Fred Maurer's letters to his wife, from which she has inferred that he was opposed to leaving the island and did so merely as a matter of good discipline and subordination to the commander and membership of the party.

From unselfish motives, not desiring to worry all the men, Knight had told only Crawford of his scurvy symptoms and had undoubtedly convinced Crawford who had no experience of scurvy that he knew exactly how to cure himself and would therefore be in no danger if left behind. The disease had not developed sufficiently for Maurer to recognize it; or, we may feel sure, he would then have insisted that the trip to Nome be abandoned.

In the appendix section devoted to 'The Fragmentary Papers of Milton Galle,' the reader will find that when first Galle heard Crawford and Knight discussing a trip they intended to make from Wrangel to Nome via Siberia, he puzzled over it and recorded in his diary that he could not figure out why they planned to leave the island, and did not

believe that if they left it they would go in the direction of Siberia. In the appendix we have speculated on where Galle may have thought they would try to go. Here we mention his doubts in connection with Fred Maurer's letters to his wife, because they indicate that he as well as Maurer was against the trip even after all four understood that Nome was the real objective. Still they cannot have made very vigorous protests, for Knight, who is fair to everybody in every part of the diary, would have recorded them.

It is clear from all we know of both Crawford and Galle that they would not have left Knight alone had they realized his illness; this is still more clear of Maurer who on the same Wrangel Island seven years before had stood by his dying comrades to the last. I have discussed this aspect of Maurer's character with his commander on Wrangel in 1914, John Munro (who now lives in Berkeley, California). Munro says emphatically, as I had also heard from others, that no one of the *Karluk* party of seventeen was more competent, staunchly loyal and uniformly unselfish than Maurer. 'If I were to name the best comrade I ever had under danger or hardship,' said Munro, 'I would have to name Fred Maurer, in spite of the admiration and gratitude I felt for several of the others.'

It is easy now to see that if Fred Maurer had stayed on the island all would have been well there, for he would have secured not only the bears which Ada Blackjack saw and feared to approach, but also doubtless many other animals of which she saw no sign. It is true, of course, as Knight points out, that three men were better than two for the journey to Nome, because they could ease the sledge over the fractured ice, thus protecting it from damage.

The entries from January 22nd to January 27th are routine, the making of clothing, tending of fox traps, etc. On the 28th Crawford wrote the following postscript to his letter to me of January 7th:

January 28th, 1923.

Knight and I returned about a week ago. Knight is troubled with scurvy. As the five dogs are scarcely enough,

he was dubious of making the trip as his strength is undermined. My plans are unchanged except that I am taking Maurer and Galle with me. I am taking both Maurer and Galle, although I would like to leave one of them with Knight. I think it is wisdom to do this, as it would be disastrous to return a second time.

ALLAN R. CRAWFORD

The first start of Crawford and Knight (January 7th) would evidently have been made at the same time of year and with the same equipment if there had been unlimited food supplies on the island.¹ We have noted in our editorial comment and Knight has pointed out in his diary entry for January 12th that their chief error in outfitting was that they loaded the sled too heavily; he does not say with what, but presumably it was food, for, besides their diaries, there was nothing much else they were likely to carry in addition to their bare camping equipment. In the entry for January 7th Knight complains about the dogs that they were soft from having been stall-fed without work. Neither of those difficulties would have been less likely to trouble them had food been more abundant.

[Mr. Noice has told us, during the last revision of this book, that Ada Blackjack told him the party carried a considerable amount of geological specimens gathered the previous year by Crawford. We have not been able to get in communication with Ada Blackjack herself at such short notice to get her full statement of this. We especially want to know if they carried these specimens on their second journey also.]

So far as actual diary entries are concerned, we are not completely informed of the motives which led to the original planning of the journey. We have already suggested that fear of difficulty in feeding the dogs over winter may have been one of the immediate reasons. Knight mentions (*a*) desire to communicate with me if I were wintering on the

¹ See paragraph beginning, 'As published, my newspaper stories gave the impression,' in the statement of Mr. Harold Noice, *ante*.

Siberian shore, (*b*) desire to send me messages from Nome if I were 'in civilization,' and (*c*) the following of orders or plans agreed upon by us before they left Seattle (this has been explained *ante*). Crawford's letter (already quoted) adds:

'My decision to leave here was made last year with advice of Knight and on consideration of orders received from you and the desirability of giving you news. In fact, as early as last spring I considered it, and when I saw how sparse seal and bear were I decided it would be unwise to stay here with the dogs all winter. Especially so since trapping is not worth staying for. . . .

'We intend to go due south to Siberian coast and thence along the coast to Cape Serdze, Whaling, Diomedes, Nome.'

We have no reason to doubt that these were the main motives for the journey towards Siberia and Alaska. But from my own experience in the Arctic both with myself and with many men under my command I would judge there were several subsidiary reasons. The party had felt confined on the island and wanted to be doing something. Some of them were homesick. Crawford may have been anxious to get south to continue his university studies. They were all hungry for news of the outside world which they had left a year and a half before. They wanted to give me the benefit of their experience in case I were outfitting in 1923 the expedition which they and I had hoped I might have organized in 1922.¹

Such were doubtless the original reasons for the planning of the journey months before it was made. They were going to make it as soon as the weather became cold enough and the ice in their opinion safe enough — that is, in January. But when January came a further reason for going had developed. The quantity of supplies on hand was such that if five

¹ A discussion of the surprising fact that Galle's record shows he did not at first know where Knight and Crawford were going, or did not believe what they told him about their plans, is found in the appendix under 'Fragmentary Papers of Milton Galle,' and in the introduction to the paper on 'Plover Land.'

people and five dogs remained on the island, they would have to go on short rations until sufficient game was secured. That might be only a few days if a bear or two came to camp; but it might be until April when the spring sealing began if neither bear hunting nor floe sealing prospered sooner. But if two men and five dogs were removed from the commissariat, the remaining three people would have food enough till summer. This was the new reason which presented itself for carrying out the old plans.

We may, therefore, summarize by saying that while the original start for Nome would doubtless have been made at the same season, with the same outfit and with similar chances of success if there had been a hundred tons of food on hand, still the food shortage which developed in mid-winter may at least be supposed to have had a deciding influence in preventing a reversal of the original plan at the time of the first start – January 7th.

For the second start, January 28th, we have Crawford's definite statement that he considered another failure to get away from Wrangel Island would be 'disastrous.' On that point there is room for disagreement with authorities equally qualified by experience – some will side with Crawford's opinion for leaving the island, and some with Maurer's for staying as the safer policy. I would have to be among those to side with Maurer, for if I did not then all my printed books and all my exploring career could be quoted against me.

But I do not want to be understood to say that I am certain that if I had been on Wrangel Island I would have voted for the entire party to stay there. I only mean that if the one question had been the safety of all concerned, I would have favoured staying. But if the motives being discussed had been boredom, a longing for news, a feeling that the party had accomplished its purposes on the island and might as well leave, a desire to give information to an arctic expedition presumably being outfitted in 1923 – with any or all these motives before me I should probably have said that if they felt like undertaking the long walk and the hard work of

going to Nome I saw nothing against it. Or had some one proposed that the easiest way to feed the dogs through the winter was to take them to Siberia where feed was plentiful, I might have agreed. It is a part of our ordinary arctic procedure to take dogs long distances in order to carry them through the midwinter darkness in a region where food is supposed to be abundant. Under such conditions I do not remember that we have ever weighed the danger of the journey. As stated elsewhere, I suppose that any one of our experienced ice travellers (such as Storker Storkerson, George Wilkins, Ole Andreasen, Aarnout Castel, or Karsten Andersen) would say, after years of experience in crossing thousands of miles of such ice as lies in January between Wrangel Island and Siberia, that the danger of this hundred-mile sledging is about the equivalent of a hundred-mile aeroplane flight across a mountain range – much greater danger than that of railway travel, but nothing to keep you if you want to go. So, had I been there, I might have voted for the sledge journey to Siberia.

That the chief motive for leaving Wrangel was either a feeling that their work on the island was so far done that they might as well return to civilization, or else a desire to get in touch with us if we were outfitting a new arctic expedition, is to be inferred from the frequent offhand references to a journey 'to Nome, via Siberia.' In addition to the diary entries quoted elsewhere, we have one of these in Knight's description of the symptoms of his illness, which he left as a separate manuscript. The full reference with its context is: 'On January 8th, 1923, Crawford and I started for Nome, via Siberia, and, excepting the pains in my legs, especially at night, I seemed to be all right.'

That most of the men left Wrangel with the expectation to continue arctic work either there or elsewhere we know from several sources. Ada Blackjack tells us that she understood Crawford, Galle and Maurer would all come back from Nome with the ship they expected in August, 1923; she says that Galle was especially explicit in telling her he would come back. Galle's intention to continue in the Arctic is also

shown by Crawford's letter to me in which he recommends Galle as an exceptionally good sledge traveller (this was written by Crawford when he was leaving Galle behind and when he feared his party and mine might pass each other on the ice between Wrangel and Siberia).

That Crawford and Knight were going to continue we know from Knight's letter to his parents, in which he tells them that he and Crawford are planning an expedition to Melville Island when the Wrangel work is over.

There has been considerable discussion among polar authorities as to why Crawford and Knight many months in advance fixed on the middle of January as the time to start for Nome, when the middle of February would have been so much safer and easier. We have been able to think of three reasons: (1) They wanted to cross Bering Straits by sledge, and that would become very dangerous after March—Knight estimated sixty or seventy days for the journey (see entry for November 1st, 1922). They would, therefore, have to leave in January to be able to cross the Straits in March. (2) They wanted to get in touch with me so early that I would still have part of the winter for organizing a new arctic expedition or altering old plans. (3) Crawford and Knight wanted to get out early enough so they could finance and organize an arctic expedition they had planned to Melville Island. Of this last we know only that Ada Blackjack says she often heard them planning this Melville Island expedition, and that Knight says in the above-mentioned letter to his parents: 'Crawford and I have a trip all planned out to spend a winter on Melville Island. All that is likely to stop us is cash! But Crawford is a geologist, and he has some good connections high up in the Canadian Geological Survey, and as no geological work of any importance has ever been done on Melville Island, he is confident that the Government will be willing to send us there with no salary. I will state in this place that Crawford is a comer, and one of the smartest young or old men that I have ever met. He tries his best to hide it, partly through modesty and partly not to appear supercilious. I'll put C. up against anyone I know.'

There seems little doubt that the plans of most or all the four men to continue polar work through the future years would have been carried out had the second attempt to reach Siberia failed like the first in such a way that the party could have returned to the island, for then would the *Donaldson* have found them all safe when she came in August. I at least cannot think otherwise who have so often been down to less than a week's rations in a country wholly unknown, and have nevertheless always found game before even a dog had to be sacrificed.

But it was not to be. On the day of their second start, good weather and good luck of a sort sped them beyond the chance of retreat and into dangers of another kind – those of treacherous ice and furious gales at sea. Such is our ominous reading of Knight's cheerful entry for January 28th: 'They're off. At nine-ten A.M., a nice clear day, warmer than usual and all in their favour. They were going due south when last seen, and were soon out of sight.'

January 29th: 'Blowing a howling gale from the east. This camp is very comfortable, and a little wood goes a very long way. Yesterday and to-day I have been busy fixing the place up, making it convenient for two people. Now we are well fixed until the snow starts to melt in the spring. All of the boxes outside will then have to be cleaned out [the snow removed from them], the roof and walls of the house dug away, and numerous other things will keep us busy. If only a bear would wander into camp, we would be fixed in great shape for a long while, for with only two of us and no dogs a bear would go a long way. In a couple of months the females will be coming out of their holes with their cubs, and then we should have plenty of meat. My left leg just above the knee is considerably swollen, and is giving me some pain. Whether it is from scurvy or not I am not sure and, although it does not lay me up, it makes moving rather painful. Fresh meat will fix me up, I am sure.

'I wonder what people will say about my staying here alone with the woman. Crawford and I talked the matter over thoroughly and, although I disliked staying and he disliked

my staying, we came to the conclusion that it was the best thing to do. Stefansson, I am sure, will agree to that. And with some discretion, I am sure the three who have just left can soften things down a lot when they get to Nome. The woman does not seem to mind it and, to be perfectly frank, I think she is rather glad of the circumstance, for she is most anxious to get a white man for a husband. *No chance* as far as I am concerned.'

January 30th: 'Still howling from the east. Rather hard luck for the travellers, but possibly they are far enough south to be out of the blow. At least it will be a side wind for them, and though inconvenient they will still be able to travel. The woman is spending her time knitting and I am reading.'

January 31st: 'Still blowing hard. Had to go outside this A.M. and rustle a little wood. Blowing and drifting as hard as I have ever seen it. Cold, clear overhead.'

Perhaps it is our almost certain knowledge of the tragedy which must have taken place during this gale that makes us feel inclined to marvel at Knight's optimism when he says on the second day of the storm that, 'at least it will be a side wind for them, and though inconvenient they will still be able to travel.' There is, at least, one sort of comfort in that sentence — it shows Knight thought Crawford's party was in good physical condition. There never was any foundation for the newspaper assumption that the men were weak with hunger when they started, but there is a diary statement, January 12th, that Crawford had frozen his feet. But that entry is the only contradictory one we have noted in Knight's whole diary. For he says in one and the same sentence that Crawford froze his feet *badly*, and that the frost bites *are nothing serious*. The 'nothing serious' alternative receives strengthening from the just quoted entry of January 30th. The frost bites cannot have been very bad, since Knight now assumes that Crawford would be travelling in a howling gale. Even with danger threatening, as with Scott when he saw death approaching in the Antarctic, men do not usually travel in a raging blizzard, even with a side wind, unless they are in fit condition. To write so, Knight at least must have supposed them

fit. At the very least we can therefore conclude that, even while this gale was howling, Knight was comfortable in his mind about the success of the party in reaching Siberia and Nome. Both from his diary and from what Ada Blackjack says, we know he held that view without a question to the end.

In these entries the description of the weather for the three days next after the party set out is ominous. 'Blowing a howling gale' means little to the experienced northern traveller on land or on firm ice. But the weather had been fine the day they started, and the travellers had vanished rapidly over the horizon going straight south. They were therefore now on no firm landfast ice but on the treacherous moving floes of the open sea.

An experienced arctic man on Wrangel Island was bound to feel about the travelling party somewhat as we feel when a party of our friends takes the air to fly from London to Switzerland. We know by statistics that the danger of such flights is many hundred times greater than that of steamer and railway travel, and still we say truly that the risk is nevertheless so slight that one is not justified in worrying or in refraining from the journey if there is any good motive for hastening beyond the speed of steamers and railways. We might discuss the various dangers of such a flight due to breakage of machinery, fogs, or to human errors. Similarly, discussing the prospects of the trip towards Nome from Wrangel Island, we would probably have put the case about as follows:

There should have been seven dogs instead of five, but the five could pull the sledge along on level going. In rough ice the three men could help it along so rapidly that from all we know of such travel we would have expected for them a speed of twelve to fourteen miles a day when weather did not prevent travelling. The ice between Wrangel and the mainland breaks frequently, so we would have expected numerous detours to get around patches of open water or young ice, lengthening the total travelling distance between their camp and Cape North from one hundred and forty to nearly two

hundred miles. At thirteen miles a day this would make fifteen travelling days. Actual delays in camp to wait for the freezing of water are common enough in the milder months of April and November, but are rare in January because of the intense frost that bridges a lead in fifteen to thirty hours.

In normal weather the competent judge would have foreseen only one danger to life, that of walking on thin ice and resulting death by drowning. In ten years of ice travel, I have had a dozen narrow escapes from such drowning and most of my companions have had several. This included Knight, who to my knowledge had had several narrow escapes. I am not sure that Maurer had ever actually been in danger from thin ice, but I know that he understood the conditions and the theory. But with a party who are in a great hurry, the risk is correspondingly increased. They might travel in their haste late into the gathering twilight some afternoon. Perhaps there was a snowfall the day before, which spread a white covering over treacherous ice that would otherwise have given warning through its colour, grey or black. We have quoted above Knight's entry for January 12th, where he describes himself and Crawford making a road through several hundred yards of rough ice to reach what they thought a broad solid expanse, but found to be treacherous young ice covered with a recent snowfall, thus compelling them to return. The travelling party may have met exactly such conditions in worse light, and may not have realized their danger until too late. Again, they may have recognized the danger, may have estimated it carefully, taken chances on it because they were in a hurry, and erred as it is always humanly possible to do.

On pp. 295-298 of *The Friendly Arctic* I am long ago on record to show that my own experience of many years and the advice of three travelling companions, one at least of them equally experienced, did not save me from deciding to cross a belt of ice which broke under the sled just as we were reaching a strong floe on the farther side. Had that ice broken a tenth of a second sooner we should have lost our sledge and we might have starved to death a few days or

weeks later. Under slightly different circumstances we might have made the same decision with a result fatal almost instantaneously to all of us. These are chances that all arctic travellers take; they have led to more arctic tragedies than any other cause. The reader will remember from Hadley's narrative in the early part of this book how on one occasion Munro and Malloch with a team broke through thin ice, got soaking wet, and barely escaped drowning; and how on another occasion Munro's party broke through again with loss of a team and sledge in the water and the separation of the men into two parties — a very narrow escape. Hadley's opinion also was that the party of Anderson, the mate of the *Karluk*, were drowned, not by walking on thin ice in good weather, but under such conditions as are described in the next paragraph.

The discussion so far has been based on the assumption of only ordinary weather. But Knight records that the day after the party started it was 'blowing a howling gale.' This brings in another element of danger constantly faced by the polar traveller, just as the traveller by rail always faces the danger of collisions and broken bridges. That any man who had ever accompanied me (such as Knight or Maurer) must have been fully aware of this danger is shown by my own account of such an occurrence. Often we camp in the evening without knowing that a gale is coming, and our choice of a camp site may be casual. But the evening in question we knew that a storm was upon us and we selected the safest-looking ice we could find. That gale was so terrific that when we drew lots to see which of us would go outdoors and stand a two-hour watch, Storkerson went out and came back in to us in ten or fifteen minutes to inquire why we had not answered his shouts. He had been almost pressing his mouth to the tent while he shouted to us, but we had not heard him inside the tent because of the roar of the breaking ice and the howling of the wind. Thereupon we decided, since it was only taking a chance in any case, we might as well all be indoors. We did not stand watch, and we knew every moment of the night that it was only chance whether we lived through. We

did live through, but that was no credit to us. The ice all around us was so broken up and tumbled about during the night that the footprints of a bear which had been a mile away in the evening were only about three hundred yards away the next morning. The ice had not only telescoped to that extent, but nearly every cake of it had turned somersaults during the night, except fortunately the one that our tent stood on.¹ The danger on such a night is no doubt equal to that of a severe battle. That we can admit this and still maintain that polar exploration is not very dangerous is because such gales, like tropical hurricanes, come only once in several years.

In a two-year diary Knight uses only three or four times the expression 'blowing a howling gale.' He does so now, and presumably this was as bad a gale as the one I have just tried to describe. The weather had been good the previous day, and it is possible that the party took no special precautions in selecting their camp site. It is also possible that with the best judgment no exceptionally safe camp was available. The first is the more likely supposition, for one does not take precautions every day against events not likely to occur more than once or twice in a decade.

The distance from Wrangel Island to Siberia is so short and the conditions of the journey so familiar to all polar travellers, that we know one of two things must have happened. The party broke through treacherous ice on the day's march or they lost their lives at night under conditions where ability and experience count for nothing and chance is everything. Otherwise they would have come through to Siberia or returned to Wrangel. If their sledge broke they would have had greater difficulty but almost certainly they would have won through even then.

With the departure of Crawford, Galle and Maurer we enter upon the brave history of Knight's struggle with illness and misfortune. The diary shows that at first he did not

¹ This story is told in its proper setting in *The Friendly Arctic*, pp. 167-9.

doubt securing enough fresh meat to stop the scurvy, and we cannot speak of courage while as yet he saw no danger; but later he recognized the danger, and faced it in a spirit which we believe the reader will see better and appreciate more keenly if we refrain from eulogy no matter how deserved. We go on with the simple story in Lorne Knight's own words.

February 1st: 'The gale let up during the night, and I intended going to Maurer's traps but did not feel well enough. Both of my legs are swollen above the knees, and the left is much the worse. If it is scurvy, it is acting differently from the previous time [when he had scurvy in 1917 as related *ante*], for then my legs did not swell. My gums are soft, but they cause me no inconvenience. When I exercise myself to any extent, as I did to-day lifting a couple of logs, I become so short of breath that I have to sit down or else fall down. This also is different from the previous attack. I am not in the least worried, but I would like to know what is the trouble. I have lost my hearty appetite that I had some time ago, although I still am able to "peck" a little. I am sure the best medicine that I could take would be a few feeds of fresh meat. Hence my desire to go to the traps. If only a bear would walk into camp the meat would last the two of us, not counting the cat, a long time.'

February 2nd: 'Not a great deal to record. Dug out a little wood and cut some, filled water barrel with snow, etc. I feel a little better to-day than formerly. Although my legs are sore, I feel more like moving about. I am afraid, however, to go to Maurer's traps, and shall wait until I get feeling better. Partly clear. Light breeze from the east. *Come on, Bear!*'

February 3rd: 'Cut a little wood and general duties. Tried to dig out a few logs but had to give it up. As long as I remain quiet I feel O.K., but exertion is what gets me. Woman scraping [tanning] skins.'

On February 4th there is a detailed entry about symptoms. It is the present intention to publish this verbatim as part of a paper on scurvy in some medical journal, probably that of the American Medical Association, for that journal has already

published (Nov. 23rd, 1918, Vol. LXXI, pp. 1715-18) a paper on the attack of scurvy which Lorne Knight suffered in 1917. While the planned article will include the diary entry of February 4th, it will consist in large part of a separate paper on his symptoms which Knight wrote about this time. In a way it is to be regretted that this paper, while suited to the medical profession, is not so well adapted for general reading. However, its main interest would be only to show further the marvellous spirit with which Lorne Knight met illness and every other misfortune. But that is sufficiently established by the rest of his straightforward record.

February 5th: 'General duties. I tried to cut wood this A.M. but had to give it up. No breath. The woman, however, got plenty for the day. I wish the three fellows would come back, for I can see plainly that it will be very hard on the woman if I get completely laid up.'

At this point we might have inserted in the record Fred Maurer's last letter to his wife, for it has a bearing on whether the three men, or at least all the three, should have left Wrangel Island. But Mrs. Maurer, on consultation with his parents and family, has decided against this for two reasons. The letter as a whole is of too intimate a nature, and it contains isolated sentences which the public might misinterpret, not knowing other circumstances of the case and not having seen other communications from him. As we have mentioned in this book, Maurer's family have concluded from all the evidence in their possession that he did not wish to leave Wrangel Island, that he did so in deference to the authority and opinion of the others, that the entire party would probably have lived through had they remained on the island, and that Maurer would probably have been able to secure enough fresh meat for himself, Knight and Ada Blackjack had the journey towards Nome been attempted only by Crawford and Galle. Like everything in this case not actually recorded as a happening in some authentic document, these opinions of the Maurer family are only opinions. They are significant, however, since they are based in part on evidence which we cannot publish. I have, therefore,

asked John Maurer, elder brother of Fred Maurer, to write a statement on behalf of the family which I might print somewhere. I have chosen to place it here immediately after recording Knight's wish of February 5th that 'the three fellows would come back.'

NEW PHILADELPHIA, OHIO,

December 15th, 1924.

DEAR MR. STEFANSSON, —

My opinion of Fred's letter to his wife and the other evidence is that Fred did not want to leave the island, and that Knight and Crawford insisted and brought forward the argument about the shortage of food, and he was persuaded to go with that reason. No doubt he also felt that the two young men, Crawford and Galle, needed some one with experience with them to cross the ice.

In reading Knight's diary carefully I get the opinion that Fred allowed himself to be persuaded to go for two reasons: one, to give the benefit of his greater experience of ice travel to Crawford and Galle, and the other to leave Knight and Ada enough food.

I am sure that the boys could have caught enough game to keep alive and perhaps to have saved Knight if they had all stayed on Wrangel Island. The diary shows Knight and Crawford making arrangements to leave long before they did, only waiting for the right season, but not a word about Fred or Galle wanting to go. I don't say this to criticize Knight, for he no doubt thought going to Nome was the best thing to do. Evidently Fred also felt sure of getting safely across to Siberia and Alaska, so that his disinclination to go was not from fear of accidents on the moving ice but only from policy.

I have taken up with the family the question of publishing the letters Fred left on Wrangel Island to his mother and to his wife. Mother feels that the letter was for her only, and does not want it published. I have taken the matter up with Delphine, and she feels the same way about Fred's letter to her. No doubt Fred wrote these letters the last moment

before leaving the island. Had he arrived safe the letters would not have been received by his mother or his wife. I also believe that he never intended them for publication.

Sincerely,

(Signed) JOHN MAURER

Having seen what opinions Fred Maurer's family have derived from his letters to them, we go on with Lorne Knight's record of what happened from day to day and how he faced a growing illness, the danger of which he fully understood.

February 6th: 'Ada spent some time digging out logs to-day which she put in the storm shed. I cut a little wood inside. She is cheerful, and seems to be glad to relieve me of all exertion, which I am sure I appreciate. If I only had breath when I moved about I would not be so badly off, but at the least movement, especially rapid, I am puffing like a freight locomotive. In the bags of blubber that we have is a little meat attached to the blubber, and I am eating all of this that I can. There are only two pokes left [probably between three hundred and four hundred pounds] and as far as I can see they will soon be cleaned of meat. So my fondest hope is a bear. Maurer's traps no doubt contain a fox or two, but I am unable to tackle it [the walk to examine the traps].'

February 7th: 'The woman took a short walk to a few of the traps but no luck. She and I, but mostly she, cut a little wood to-day. While so doing I fainted, and was out a few seconds. The woman, I am sure, did not realize until then that I was really sick, and when I came to she was scared stiff. I got into bed and am all O.K., excepting a very slight fever which I now have. My appetite is still good, thank fortune, and I am continually loading up with seal blubber. The woman is a great deal more frightened over my condition than I am, and I don't deny that it is a rather mean position in which she finds herself, but she is wonderfully cheerful and is now busy sharpening the wood saw. She insists on doing practically everything, and I willingly permit her, for I am not able to do much. The woman cannot read the ther-

mometer, and I do not wish to get out of my sleeping bag, so the readings will be discontinued for a time.'

February 8th: 'In bed all day. Feeling all O.K. The woman went to some of Maurer's traps to-day. No luck, and only saw one fresh fox track. Twelve days since the fellows left.'

February 9th: 'The woman went to the traps again. No luck. So warm that we have been without fire nearly all day.'

February 10th: 'Feeling poorly to-day. I can see that I cannot go away from camp, and unless a bear walks in there is small chance of getting one, for the woman cannot be trusted with my rifle. She is easily excited and knows nothing about a gun. This is the only rifle we have. She went to the traps to-day and saw only one fresh track. In the meantime, all I can do is to eat all the blubber possible. *Come on, Bear!*'

February 11th: 'Although I have no appetite, I am forcing myself to eat all the blubber I can hold [because he believed it would cure scurvy – an error probably derived from his reading of popular articles about 'vitamins,' as discussed elsewhere]. When I say that I don't feel like eating, what I mean is that I don't feel like eating the things we have here. I am continually hankering for fresh meat. Fortunately, I am able to read and sleep as though there were nothing the matter with me, but I would a great deal rather be up and about. But as soon as I get up I get so dizzy that I have to lie down again.'

February 12th: 'Had quite a rainstorm for an hour or so this afternoon, and very warm. Thank fortune I still feel like reading and pass away my time at that and sleeping, which I still do wonderfully well.'

February 13th: 'I feel as though I would like to get up, but when I make a try I am dizzy as can be. I am as hungry as a wolf, but it is all I can do to force down a few mouthfuls. If anyone hankered for anything I hanker for *fresh raw meat* and lots of it.' In the entire two-year diary the only food Knight mentions hankering for is fresh meat. It would doubtless be otherwise if we had the diaries of Crawford and Galle. During the first and second year of a diet mainly or

wholly meat almost anyone will long for accustomed foods, and especially vegetables. But this was Knight's sixth year in the Arctic and, so far as his diary shows, he had completely outgrown his longing for vegetables.

February 14th: 'Feel a little better to-day. I have a better appetite than yesterday, and ate quite a feed.'

February 15th: 'The woman went to a few of the traps. No luck. A very large bear had come from the east some time during the night and had passed a quarter of a mile north of camp, going west. He stopped and smelled a few fox traps and then went on. The woman says the tracks are the largest she has ever seen. Just our luck that he had to go by at night, and still it gives us a little hope.'

We are omitting the repeated descriptions of symptoms and their progress, for these are chiefly of interest to the medical profession, and will be available to them elsewhere, as stated on page 251.

On February 16th there is a long description of symptoms ending with 'all I need is *meat*.'

It is doubtless the progress of the scurvy, a recognized symptom of which is gloom and irritability, that leads Knight on February 17th to express his first annoyance with the Eskimo woman. In this connection it must also be remembered that we have outside evidence that Ada Blackjack herself was at this period ill, with some of the symptoms at least similar to Knight's own. That she should get scurvy from the same food as Knight did is not strange, since her being an Eskimo would not protect her if her diet was deficient in underdone fresh meat. This has been shown repeatedly in Arctic Alaska. The Eskimo there are never known to have had the disease when living on their own food, but many have had it and some have died from it when living among white people who also had scurvy, or when they were for any reason induced or compelled to subsist mainly on groceries.

In her care for Knight's welfare and peace of mind, Ada seems to have concealed her own illness. In that she was probably misguided, for had she frankly owned up that she was sick, it would have caused Knight less mental uneasiness

than the feeling he was otherwise bound to get and did at times entertain, that she was not doing her best.

The full entry for February 17th is: 'About the same as yesterday. The woman says that she is not going to the traps any more, and intimates that she doesn't care whether we get any meat or not. A rather happy prospect for me. She says that she is ready to give up. All she has been doing is getting wood and a few odd jobs, no great hardship.'

On February 18th Knight himself evidently has realized that yesterday the difficulties with Ada Blackjack were due to her being ill. The entry is: 'Feeling fairly well to-day. A fairly good appetite. The woman is feeling better to-day, not so grouchy. She got a little wood.'

There is nothing of consequence on the 19th. On the 20th: 'The woman got a fat fox in one of her traps. A good feed for the two of us and the cat. She also cut some wood. I feel fairly well to-day, especially after getting a full stomach of underdone meat.'

From the entry of February 21st, two and a half lines were erased by Mr. Noice, and we have no idea what they may have contained. The rest of the entry is: 'Feeling fairly well. Lower gums swelling in a couple of places.'

In addition to describing his symptoms on February 22nd, Knight says that, 'The woman is better to-day. She got some wood and did a few odd jobs about camp.'

February 23rd: 'It blew a howler all night, but let up by six A.M. The woman cut some wood.' Then, after a description of symptoms, he says: 'Appetite fairly good and I sleep well. *Oh! you Bear!*'

On February 24th and 25th Knight says in connection with his description of symptoms that he is feeling a little better and that his appetite is good, adding, 'Oh yes, my desire for cold water is enormous. I am sure I drink at least three quarts a day. Perhaps I should not do this, but I don't think it is doing any harm.'

On February 26th: 'There was nothing much to record,' but on the 27th: 'The woman went outside, rushed in and woke me up saying that a bear was coming toward camp

along the beach from the east. The wind was blowing a little from the west and drifting along the ground, so I told her to tell me when the bear got within two hundred yards. In the meantime I would remain in my bag. The woman kept saying that it was getting closer and closer. From the description she first gave me I thought the bear was a long time getting here. Finally she went on the roof of the house with my glasses, and the bear proved to be a yellow dirty piece of ice in the distance. Seen through the drifting snow it appeared to be moving. Feeling about the same as the last few days. The woman saw a fox to-day.'

From February 28th to March 2nd we have repetitions of 'feeling about the same.' On March 2nd he adds that, 'The woman caught a poor fox, fair eating, however.' On the 3rd, 'The woman got a fox this morning, not very fat but welcome.'

We marvel all the more at Knight's cheerfulness when we remember that gloom is a symptom of scurvy. It was the disease temporarily submerging his good humour which made him paint his situation almost as black as we feel the rest of us might, in the continuation of his entry for March 3rd: 'Reading and lying on my back day-dreaming about "outside" to kill time, which goes rather slowly. It is bad enough to be laid up "outside" where one has newspapers, good food, a comfortable *clean* bed and some one to talk to, but I just lie here in my dirty, hairy sleeping bag and read books again for the fourth or fifth time. As a conversation-alist the woman is the bunk. Clear, calm and cold.'

But with even the strong hold of the disease, this was only a temporary depression, for Knight says March 4th that 'things are going nicely. The woman got a fat fox to-day, and I had a big feed of underdone meat.' The good humour continued. On March 5th we are told he is 'Feeling a little better to-day, probably because of the feeds of fresh meat I have been having lately. Blowing hard, so the woman did not go outside of the house.'

The 6th he was a little depressed again: 'Feeling the same to-day. The woman cut a little wood and broke the spade

handle. She saw one fresh fox track. Nothing of importance to note except that this existence is extremely monotonous for me stuck here in my sleeping bag all day.' But Knight's optimism is not far below the surface, for he ends the entry with, 'All I want is to get a crack at a bear.'

The record for March 7th is routine, and for March 8th we have, 'Nothing to record, feeling the same.' On the 9th there is a repetition of the description of symptoms, ending so far as we have the record with, 'I am very hungry, but for the few things we have here I have very little appetite. My craving is for meat.' There was more, but at this point Mr. Noice has erased ten lines. Immediately following the erasure we have, 'Oh yes, my eyes are starting to water a little, especially when I try to read or write.'

On March 10th there was 'Nothing to record.' On March 11th: 'Cannot eat the food we have here. I am surely hungry, but I positively cannot swallow either hard bread or blubber. The woman was across the harbour mouth to-day and says there are lots of fox tracks over there. She set twelve traps. I am feeling about the same.'

On March 12th: 'It never rains but it pours. The woman caught three foxes to-day, all fairly fat. I ate quite a bit, drank a lot of soup, and feel a little better.' The effect of the fresh food as before (and as it had been when he had scurvy in 1917) was quick to show itself, for the next day Knight says, 'I am feeling better to-day and last night I had the best night's sleep I have had for some time.' Then he adds that 'The last few weeks my diary entries have been more illegible than usual. It is because they are written lying down.'

On March 14th Ada had no luck with the traps and Knight was feeling about the same. On the 15th she got a fat fox and he was 'feeling a little better.' On the 17th he says, 'Since I have been getting meat more often my spirits have come up wonderfully, and I think my swollen gums have started to go down'—this is quite parallel with the rapid recovery he had made on fresh meat in 1917.

On March 18th Knight was 'feeling better,' and on the 19th he was 'feeling somewhat better.' Ada got 'a fine fat

fox to-day.' On the 20th he was 'feeling good. The woman got a fox to-day. My gums are noticeably decreasing in size, and the little red spots are slowly leaving my arms. Have not much of an appetite but force myself to eat.'

March 21st: 'The woman got a fat fox to-day. I am not getting much stronger although my spirits have picked up wonderfully since the foxes are being caught. The swelling in my gums is going down a little. I am as thin as a side-show freak.'

March 22nd: 'The woman got no foxes to-day but lost three traps that were fastened on one wire [evidently carried off by a fox that had been caught in one of them]. Have been on my back for over a month and am getting tired of it. Would like to get out.'

March 23rd we have an unusually long entry (partly a description of symptoms) of which we quote the more significant parts. 'No luck at the traps. Caught myself whistling this A.M. Not that I don't want to whistle, God knows. However, this is in spirit only, for I am as weak as a cat. Just drank a quart of fox soup. I wish we could get a bear. This fox meat does not lie easy on my stomach. The little red spots have nearly all left my arms, but are in strong evidence still on my legs. The swelling in my gums is going down very slowly. My legs, I think, are not quite as sore as a few weeks ago, and the left one, which was badly swollen and hard, is now soft and the swelling has disappeared. The woman tells me that the colour is coming back into my legs which were quite bloodless.'

At this stage things are looking more cheerful to us who read the diary and they evidently looked more cheerful to Knight himself. Foxes were beginning to be caught, and their fresh meat was having upon his health and spirits the same effect that the fresh caribou meat had had in 1917. The entries showing irritation with Ada Blackjack during the previous month had been followed in each case by other entries where he cheerfully and gratefully recorded her activities in securing food and otherwise caring for him. He may have thought these were mere changing moods of hers,

or he may have understood, as we do, that when she was more sick than usual she remained in the house and when she was feeling a little stronger she gathered wood, tended the traps, and did her best in every way.

But at this hopeful and critical time we come to a sudden end of the record. This is where ten pages have been torn from the diary by some one. Ada Blackjack says these ten pages were still in the diary when she turned it over to Mr. Harold Noice on the arrival of the *Donaldson* at Wrangel Island. Mr. Noice says that the pages had been torn out before he received the diary. At one time he published a newspaper statement implying that Ada had removed these pages in order to hide guilt, the nature of which he suggested. Later still he desired to withdraw this definite charge against her, but continued to insist that the ten pages had been missing when he received the diary. That contention brings up the possibility that Knight might have torn them out himself, but this is contradicted by Ada Blackjack's statement that the diary was intact when Mr. Noice received it. So long as she maintains that attitude the issue will remain between her and Mr. Noice. That situation is gone into more fully in Appendix IV of this book.

From the point where the last pages are torn from Knight's diary we have the story of his illness in three documents — Ada Blackjack's diary, her statement to Mr. E. R. Jordan, and her conversations as recorded by Mrs. Inglis Fletcher. We could devise a composite narrative from those three sources and place it here, but then the reader might omit the documents themselves. The diary we do not publish, for it is disjointed and in part illegible, because of the bad pencil and paper rather than through Ada's difficult handwriting and peculiar spelling. But her statement to Mr. Jordan and her talks with Mrs. Fletcher are straightforward. They give a clearer picture of the terrible situation on Wrangel Island and throw into higher relief the characters of Knight and Ada herself than could any ordinary paraphrase. Because we want you to read those documents in Appendix II, we say no more here.

It lessens a little the tragedy of Lorne Knight's story that during a month or two he did not consider that there was danger to himself, and that when he realized the danger he took it philosophically. Neither is there indication that he ever doubted the safety of his three comrades. He wrote about what they would do '*when* (not "*if*") *they get to Nome.*' In all he wrote and in all he and Ada Blackjack said to each other about Crawford's party the word was *when* and never *if*. Ada Blackjack's first question when the supply ship *Donaldson* arrived was as to why Crawford, Galle, and Maurer were not in the party (see her own story in the Appendix). That they should have been lost on the way to Siberia was and is incomprehensible to her. In Seattle in January, 1924, she first asked me if I did not think they were still safe in Siberia. A day or two later she gave it as her emphatic opinion that they were now prisoners in Siberia, or else that they were murdered after landing. There is, of course, no chance of either. For one thing, the Russian Siberians, both white and native, are a kind and hospitable people. If they did take a landing-party prisoners for political reasons they would treat them well. But the situation is even clearer than that, for Aarnout Castel and August Masik, the latter a Russian and both members of my 1913-18 expedition and comrades on it of Knight and Maurer, were living the winter 1922-23 on the Siberian coast south of Wrangel Island where our men would have landed had they suffered no accident. Both Castel and Masik have assured me in writing and verbally that no one could have landed anywhere between East Cape and the Kolyma without their hearing it.

So far as we have received it, Knight's diary is cheerful throughout. We have every reason to suppose that the ten abstracted pages did not differ in this respect, for Ada says that even after he became too weak to write his manner remained cheerful to the end. There is not a whimper anywhere nor a suggestion that he himself or anyone else was to blame. There are no heroics, no vain regrets. He was confined to the house by the gradually increasing illness, and wrote longer entries because there was more leisure. It is a

thrilling story only if one reads the heroism between the lines. His was that type of courage which never feels the need of becoming modesty. It was not the attitude of the martyr before sacrifice or of the hero giving his life for a glorious cause. It was rather the light-hearted seriousness of the Tommy going into battle.

Knight died on June 22nd, a little before the most powerful ship could have reached Wrangel Island from Nome in even the most favourable season. Ada Blackjack made the record on Milton Galle's typewriter:

WRANGEL, ISLAND.

June 23d. 1923.

The daid of Mr. Knights death
He died on June 23d¹

I dont know what tme he die though
Anyway I write the daid. Just to
let Mr Stefanssom know what month he
died and what daid of the month

written by Mrs. Ada B, Jack.

When it came to the test, the courage of Ada Blackjack seems to have been of about the same type as Knight's own. She had been brought up in a city and, although of Eskimo blood, she knew little more about the life of a hunter than might be the case with a Frenchwoman. But she had always worked with her hands, and was full of resource and initiative. When Knight could not tend the traps she taught herself to do that, learning through failure how to do better another time. First she caught foxes and later she shot birds.

Unfortunately, but inevitably, she had the superstitions of her people. She was afraid of the evil spirits which she sup-

¹ In the diary kept on Wrangel Island we find Ada Blackjack does not mention the death of Lorne Knight but she does say that she moved into another tent June 22nd. In her statement dictated to Mr. Jordan (see Appendix) she also says that he died on June 22nd. In this letter, however, she puts it as June 23rd. So far as we can analyse the evidence, the death occurred the night between the 22nd and the 23rd.

posed were causing Knight's illness and which might do her harm. This made her trial more severe and her credit greater for having stuck it out. But a more handicapping superstition was her Eskimo fear of polar bears,¹ which has come down since the days before fire-arms when a bear had to be killed at close quarters sometimes with bow and arrows, but more frequently with a spear. Under those conditions polar bears are dangerous animals. But for a present-day man or woman who can shoot ducks with a rifle, there is scarcely more danger in a bear than there is in a duck. Unless cornered a bear will always flee when wounded. Furthermore, one who is not frightened and who has the skill to hit a duck can place a bullet where one shot is fatal. But Ada not only did not hunt for bears, she fled when she saw them. It is probable that but for this defect of training she could have saved Knight's life, for we know, partly from Knight's own experience when I treated him for a severe case of scurvy in 1917, that a sufficient quantity of fresh, underdone meat will produce a rapid recovery.

All this is on the assumption that Knight died of scurvy. But this is not quite clear. He himself mentions in the diary frequently that the symptoms were different from the ones he had before. It seems as likely that the disease was nephritis, in which case a polar bear more or less might not have made any difference.²

¹ See Ada Blackjack's own dictated story in the Appendix and the character sketch by her friend, Mrs. Inglis Fletcher.

² It was after this was written that Mr. Harold Noice returned to Mr. J. I. Knight, as related elsewhere, the various papers he had withheld from us until then. Among these we found as a separate document a short description of his symptoms written by Lorne Knight on the basis of an article on scurvy which he had found in a medical book that was in the expedition library. This description makes it seem more probable that the disease really was scurvy, although, as pointed out elsewhere, Lorne Knight himself seems to have concluded later that it was not scurvy — as we can see from the fact that when birds and eggs came in the spring he ate the meat boiled and the eggs fried (see Ada Blackjack's narrative in the Appendix), whereas he indicates in his own writing that he believed that scurvy could be cured by fresh animal food *if it were eaten raw or underdone*.

Knight's essay on the symptoms of his own disease accords in spirit with all



THE CANADIAN FLAG ON WRANGEL ISLAND, THE SUMMER OF 1914.



ADA BLACKJACK AT THE GRAVE OF LORNE KNIGHT.

When the *Donaldson* arrived at Wrangel Island August 20th, Ada Blackjack had mastered her environment so far that it seems likely she could have lived there another year, although the isolation would have been a dreadful experience. Almost certainly she would eventually have killed one of the polar bears instead of fleeing from them. The first victory would have led to the killing of several – enough to see her through. For the summer of 1923 seems to have been as good for bears as the summer of 1921. That would have been a wonderful story, but, while I believe in its probable success, I am more grateful than anyone unconcerned could be that she did not have to try it.

Ada Blackjack's experiences after Lorne Knight became ill are her own story which she tells farther on in this book. Neither can we go here into the plans we made, and which are now being carried out to continue the public-spirited pioneer enterprise for which our four young men died. Success does lessen the sting of tragedy, and their work is being carried to at least legal success, which is all the success they ever hoped for. Wrangel Island is now occupied by thirteen people under command of Charles Wells, an experienced hunter and trapper of the Far North. British ownership has been made good by occupation, so that if the question is submitted to the League of Nations, as recent dispatches from Ottawa say is being done, then we shall be certain of any verdict rendered on the basis of the evidence.¹

Whether the British Empire decides to stand on its rights is a wholly different matter. The United States has the next

the rest of his written records down to the last. It is cheerful and matter-of-fact without a trace of self-pity or vain regrets. Perhaps more than anything else he wrote it makes us marvel at the spirit of the man. There cannot have been many who have faced slowly approaching death in the prime of years without saying or writing something in blame of themselves or others for the circumstances in which they found themselves. But Ada Blackjack tells us that up to the stage when delirium began to appear he was as considerate in every spoken word as he was in his writing.

¹ We leave this paragraph as originally written the summer, 1924, although conditions have changed since then after the manner shown by the documents printed in Chapter 15, *post*.

best claim, and between these nations any dispute can always be settled amicably on a legal basis. But Russia seems to realize the value of Wrangel Island better than any other country, and is making protestations that are loud in proportion to the weakness of her case. Things often go without any other reason to those who want them most, and Russia may therefore triumph. Then there is the possibility of internationalizing the island for the benefit of all countries. But that, again, is a question of Government policy which has nothing to do with the spirit or value of the sacrifices made by Crawford, Galle, Knight and Maurer.

THE DEVELOPMENTS OF 1924

As we explained in Chapter 8, the *Donaldson* was outfitted in 1923, for her voyage to Wrangel Island, in such a way that if caught in the ice and compelled to winter she could do so. Provision was also made for reaching the island over the ice during the season 1923-24, had the ship been forced to winter on the Siberian coast or at some other distant point. As explained also, the only assistance that can be carried a hundred miles in winter over rough shifting ice, is the help of experienced hunters who would secure game for food after landing in Wrangel. At least, that is my opinion; and I was, by cable and through previous instructions, in charge of the outfitting. Accordingly there were taken on the *Donaldson* twelve Eskimos with sledges, skin boats, hunting gear, etc.

But this party — men and women — would make an ideal colony for continuing the occupation of Wrangel. It would cost hardly any more to leave them on the island, if the ship reached it, than to bring them back to Alaska. They would trap and hunt the following winter on a sharing basis, and the profits might pay a considerable part of the cost of the *Donaldson* voyage. Therefore we hired an experienced Alaska trapper and prospector, Mr. Charles Wells, to accompany the *Donaldson*, with the idea that he might be wanted to be in charge of the Eskimos if we left them on Wrangel Island.

When the *Donaldson* landed on Wrangel in September, 1923, every one — Eskimos and whites alike — were appalled by the tragedy they found, and the Eskimos at first said no inducement would keep them there a year. (We have this information from Ada Blackjack.)

But during the next day or two the Eskimos walked about the island and saw more signs of game than they had ever seen on the Alaska coast from which they came ; they questioned Ada, and were told about seals, walrus, foxes, and bears. Driftwood for housebuilding and fuel was much more abundant than on the Alaskan coasts. So they became will-

ing, and some of them eager, to stay. The original, tentative plan was therefore carried out, and Wells went ashore with his Eskimo companions. They were provisioned for two years, according to what they were used to. But a promise was made them that, if ice conditions allowed, a ship would visit them in 1924.

Up to the spring of 1924 I had been unable to get the then Government of Great Britain (Labour) to say officially whether they intended to surrender British rights of ownership in Wrangel Island, but it was beginning to look as if they might do so — judging from Press reports.¹ It is generally thought that the British Labour Party believes that the Empire is now too big, and that they are therefore in favour of decreasing its size. I have no information, however, as to the effect of this alleged general policy on the particular case of Wrangel Island.

At this stage I was faced with pressing conditions. Charles Wells and our twelve Eskimos were isolated at Wrangel Island, and I had no money with which to send in the ship I had promised them. The newspapers were saying that in the treaty negotiations between the Soviets and the British Labour Government, which were then going on in London, it was understood that the British would waive their Wrangel claims. Legally, this would make the American claims the premier ones, if Britain merely withdrew instead of specifically selling or trading her rights to Russia.

I was anxious that America should profit by our work if Britain did not care to do so. My friend Carl Lomen, owner of large reindeer interests in Alaska, had told me the Americans there were greatly interested in Wrangel Island, and that he was specially interested. He was anxious that the United States should have a chance at the island and wished, therefore, to buy the holdings of our company if we wanted to sell. I made it clear to him that according to my understanding of international law, we could sell him only our property on the island; it was the British Government and not we who owned whatever national rights had grown out of the

¹ This is a continuation of the political discussions of Chapter 9.

work of the Crawford party. More indubitably still, Britain owned the rights that came from Kellett having been the first European to see the island, and Britain (or Canada) owned the rights which came from the hoisting of the Canadian flag in 1914 and the six-month occupation of the island at that time.

Mr. Lomen agreed with all this, but felt that it would materially strengthen American rights if it could be said that from May, 1924, all persons on the island were not only American citizens but also in American employ. If the British Government meantime officially surrendered British claims, the Russians could not take immediate advantage of that concession, for they would be unable to get anybody up to Wrangel to occupy it earlier than the following August, at which time they would find in possession not a British but an American colony. If the Russians then planted a rival colony it would be a later one than the American; if they merely raised the red flag and sailed away, leaving the Americans on the island, their doing so would have no legal effect, for it is a well-established principle of international law that actual occupation is the only thing (after discovery and exploration) which gives national ownership. If they took the American colony prisoners and carried them off, the Russian claims would not be strengthened thereby legally — although there is no denying the 'moral effect' of a determined attitude which may either incense or frighten the other contending parties, according to their spirit and consciousness of strength.

On the basis of such reasoning as the above, Mr. Carl Lomen arranged with his associates to buy the Wrangel Island holdings of the Stefansson Arctic Exploration and Development Company, Limited, and to take over the employment of the party then on Wrangel Island. This was in May, 1924.

We would like to tell all we know of the rest of the story down to February, 1925. But we are so uncertain of essential facts that we dare not commit ourselves as to several of them. For one thing, the British Government (according to the Press) had agreed in its treaty negotiations with the Soviets to give Wrangel Island to Russia. But they were later defeated at the polls on the very issue of the Russian treaty,

and a Conservative Government came in. The Conservative party are not supposed to feel that the Empire is too big, but we do not know as yet if they will reverse the Labour policy with regard to Wrangel. Quite as important, now that Americans own the physical property on the island, is the fact that the American Government has not as yet committed itself, perhaps waiting for the British to speak first. Meantime interest in the Arctic in many countries is steadily increasing. Amundsen's transarctic aeroplane flight has now made a brave attempt; Nansen has announced that he will voyage across the Arctic and back by dirigible in 1927; and the American Navy says it has not discontinued plans of arctic dirigible flying, though no date for the start has as yet been set.

In this situation of uncertainty we have decided to bring the story of Wrangel Island down to date of publication not by anything we write and vouch for, but by newspaper extracts which we endorse only to the extent that, so far as we know, the errors they contain are minor ones. You who have just read this book are in almost as good a position as we to detect the errors.

In addition to the newspaper cuttings, we introduce a letter from Mr. Lomen on his motives in buying the property on Wrangel Island.

Letter from Mr. Carl J. Lomen

LOMEN REINDEER AND TRADING CORPORATION

27 Pine Street, New York,

and

Nome, Alaska.

January 29th, 1925.

MR. VILHJALMUR STEFANSSON,
Broadway at 156th Street,
New York City.

DEAR STEFANSSON,—

You ask me to state briefly my reasons for purchasing your interests in Wrangel Island. I number the different reasons in the order of their importance to me:

1. My study of the history of Wrangel Island has led me to the conclusion that should the British Government withdraw its claims to Wrangel Island, the claims of the American Government would become paramount. As an American citizen, I was anxious to take a step which would further strengthen American claims.

2. I consider that in connection with my Alaskan interests I can maintain fur-trapping establishments in Wrangel Island at a profit. I have vague plans also of developing later the possibilities of the island with regard to walrusing and sealing. I notice the Press dispatches from Vladivostok say that the Russian Government is willing to lease the island to American interests at a suitable rental, so evidently they realize the economic value of the island no less than we. But I am not as yet expecting to have to lease from Russia concessions that are either British or American.

3. I want to start on Wrangel Island a branch of our Alaska reindeer enterprise. I think it ought to be a good reindeer country, could support many thousands of reindeer, and so give to future residents of the island a permanent food supply easily obtained.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) CARL J. LOMEN

Extracts from Newspapers

CANADA'S CLAIM TO WRANGEL ISLAND
THOUGHT ABANDONED; U.S. EXPEDITION
TO VISIT IT

Stefansson, Who Wanted Ottawa to Take Over Arctic
Waste Disposes of Interest

Carl Lomen, of Nome, Alaska, Will Head Party and
Raise United States Flag

BY D. M. LE BOURDAIS

NOME, ALASKA, June 20th. — A new expedition will brave the Arctic this summer to Wrangel Island, north of Siberia, and

will leave a memorial at the graves of Lorne Knight and Allan Crawford, of Toronto. . . .

The new expedition, announced to-day, is the project of Carl Lomen, of Nome, Alaska, head of the great reindeer industry of Alaska. Vilhjalmur Stefansson, the explorer, who has been active for several years in trying to hold Wrangel Island as British territory, has disposed of his interests on Wrangel Island to Lomen. . . .

(Regina, Saskatchewan, *Leader*, June 21st, 1924.)

*

BELIEVE BRITAIN STILL HAS FIRST CLAIM UPON WRANGEL

Occupation by Allan Crawford regarded as Bestowing
Rights of Sovereignty for Period of Five Years – Don't
Anticipate Political Claim by States

BY HENRY SOMERVILLE

LONDON, June 18th. – The report that Vilhjalmur Stefansson has sold his interests in Wrangel Island to an American citizen who will finance an expedition to that district this summer, has aroused no interest in England. The sovereignty is not affected, as the British claim rests upon the fact of the occupation by Allan Crawford. The claim arising from the occupation holds good for five years.

An American citizen can, of course, hold private property rights in the British island. . . .

(Toronto, Ontario, *Star*, June 18th, 1924.)

*

STATES NOT ADVANCING CLAIM TO WRANGEL

Taking No Steps to Establish Sovereignty in Arctic Till
Next Summer

WASHINGTON, June 19. – While no official confirmation has been received here of reports that the Canadian explorer, Vilhjalmur Stefansson, has sold his interest in Wrangel Island to Carl Lomen, a United States citizen resident in Nome,

Alaska, it was stated here that no effort will be made by the United States to attempt to assert sovereignty in the Arctic.

The American Government has taken no step to establish any rights in the Arctic, and will take none, until the navy department attempts to explore the polar region next summer with the navy's monster dirigible *Shenandoah*.

(Toronto, Ontario, *Star*, June 19th, 1924.)

*

WRANGEL'S NEW LAIRD IS UNIQUE CHARACTER

Is Part-owner of Herd of more than 40,000 Reindeer

BY D. M. LE BOURDAIS

NOME, ALASKA, June 23rd. — Carl Lomen is at present known as the reindeer king. Since the Canadian explorer, Vilhjalmur Stefansson, has sold him rights within the Arctic Circle, he may become known as the King of Wrangel.

Lomen is a member of a family whose name is almost synonymous with Alaska. Nome has been there longer than the Lomens, but not much longer. The gold rush of 1900 saw the first two of them — G. J. Lomen and his son Carl — arrive on the beach at Nome. . . .

In 1903 Mrs. Lomen, a daughter, Helen, and three other sons, Ralph, Harry and Alfred J., arrived to take up permanent residence in the northern metropolis.

G. J. Lomen comes from the Middle Western states, having practised law in Caledonia, Minn., for many years before going to Alaska. He was also a member of the State legislature. He has held various local and federal offices at Nome.¹

His sons have taken a prominent part in the commercial life of Nome. . . . They turned their attention to the development of the reindeer industry a few years ago, and touched something that seems likely to have a lasting and important effect upon the future of Alaska and other far northern lands.

Their reindeer herds now number more than 40,000 head.

¹ He is now Federal Judge of Western Alaska, appointed by the President.

THE ADVENTURE OF WRANGEL ISLAND

They are shipping the meat to all the principal cities of the United States and to London.

Recently Carl Lomen, who actively directs the reindeer business, raised \$375,000 in New York to extend this enterprise.

They have now associated with them, among others, Arthur and Leonard Baldwin, well-known New York attorneys. . . . (Toronto, Ontario, *Star*, June 23rd, 1924.)

*

RUSSIAN EXPEDITION TO TAKE WRANGEL ISLAND

Ordered to Make all Inhabitants Prisoners

SEATTLE, Aug. 29th. — A vessel named *Red October*, flying the Russian flag, armed with a six-pound cannon, and carrying a company of infantry, is bound through the ice from Petropavlovsk, Kamchatka Peninsula, for Wrangel Island . . . with orders to take all inhabitants prisoners, seize all shipping and establish Russian ownership of the island in the name of the Soviet Government, Lieut.-Col. L. E. Broome, flight advancement officer for the abandoned British world-encircling expedition, declared here to-day.

He gave this information to United States naval officers in command of the battle fleet here.

. . . Col. Broome also said that the American schooner, *Herman*, of San Francisco, with Captain Louis Lane and a crew of American sailors going to the rescue of Wells, may be taken prisoners by the Soviet forces on their arrival.

(Winnipeg, Manitoba, *Free Press Bulletin*, August 30th, 1924.)

*

SOVIETS PLANT THEIR ENSIGN ON WRANGEL ISLAND

Complications Seen if Residents of Island Are Taken Prisoners by Russians

MOSCOW, Sept. 18th. — The Russian ship *Red October* arrived at Wrangel Island August 26th, and planted the flag of Soviet

Russia on the island, according to a message from Vladivostok.

The Russian party discovered one American and eleven Eskimos in Somniten Bay. The Russians will leave the island September 23rd.

Wrangel Island, best known to Canadians as the scene of the death of Lieut. Allan Crawford, youthful Toronto explorer, may again become a storm centre of international complications, if the Russian mission carries out its threat of taking prisoner the inhabitants of the island. The situation may be further involved if the American schooner *Herman*, now on its way to Wrangel for the purpose of rescuing Charles Wells, the American sailor referred to in the foregoing dispatch, arrives at the island while the Russians are still in possession. Last reports from the *Herman* were that Arctic gales had beaten it back to Nome, Alaska, for sanctuary.

Lieut. Allan Crawford, of Toronto, led an expedition, organized by Vilhjalmur Stefansson, which planted the British flag on Wrangel in 1922. . . .

(Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, *Star*, September 18th, 1924.)

*

RUSSIANS REMOVE WRANGEL COLONY

One American and 13 Eskimos, Left on Island Under
British Flag, Are Now on Soviet Ship

Employed by Nome Firm

NOME, ALASKA, Oct. 17th. — A colony intended to establish British title to Wrangel Island in the Arctic Ocean north of Siberia, was carried off by the Russian armed transport *Red October*, which raised the Russian flag there Aug. 20th, it was learned to-day. . . .

. . . the coastguard cutter *Bear* and the gasoline schooners *Herman* and *Silver Wave*, three American vessels, tried in vain to penetrate (to Wrangel Island) this summer.

The *Herman* (only) reached Herald Island, forty miles east of Wrangel Island. . . .

(New York, N.Y., *Times*, October 18th, 1924.)

*

SOVIET TO LEASE WRANGEL

Moscow Backs Claim to Disputed Island off Siberia

MOSCOW, Sept. 19th.—Soviet officials express keen satisfaction over the success of the expedition on the armed transport, *Krasny Oktiabr* (*Red October*), in planting the red flag on Wrangel Island, off Northern Siberia, taking formal possession.

They believe this action will settle the status of the island, which has been in dispute for more than a half century. The Government is prepared to lease the island to Americans or others for development, provided Russia receives an adequate portion of revenues.

(New York, N.Y., *Evening Post*, September 20th, 1924.)

*

RED SHIP BRINGS WRANGEL COLONY

American and 12 Eskimos, all U.S. Citizens, Arrive from
Frozen Arctic Island

SENT THERE BY STEFANSSON

Fearful of Soviet Transport Company Until Assured no
Harm Would be Done Them

PETROPAVLOVSK, KAMCHATKA, SIBERIA, Oct. 24th.—After a tempestuous voyage the Soviet Russian transport *Red October* arrived at Petropavlovsk to-day from Wrangel Island with Charles Wells of Uniontown, Pa., a survivor of the expedition which Vilhjalmur Stefansson took to the island a year ago, and with 12 Eskimo members of the expedition, who are American citizens.

. . . During the survey of Wrangel Island, according to M. Davidov, the Soviet expedition found the grave of Lorne Knight, who perished there, and also found the flagpole on which the British flag had formerly flown, having been run up to claim British sovereignty.

Members of the Russian expedition constructed a new pole

on which they hoisted the Red flag in the name of the Soviet republic.

According to Professor Davidov, Wells and his companions attempted to flee when they caught sight of the Red flag over the island, fearing they would be cast into prison or executed. Their alarm was dispelled, however, when the Soviet officials assured them they did not intend to harm them.

(Utica, New York, *Press*, October 25th, 1924.)

*

WRANGEL ISLAND OF UTMOST VALUE, SAYS RUSS CHIEF

Great Plane Base

Davidoff Declares Action Permanently Ends Efforts
of Imperialists to Seize Island

MOSCOW, Nov. 19th. — The Soviet expedition, which sailed the armed transport, *Red October*, to Wrangel Island, and there raised the Russian flag, returned here to-day.

With the *Red October* party was Charles Wells and his 13 Eskimos. Wells, who is a citizen of the United States, and his Eskimo companions, had been planted on Wrangel Island by an expedition sent out by Stefansson. They had been engaged in hunting and fishing there during the past year.

The American has been assigned quarters in the Government naval building under the Soviet commissariat of foreign affairs.

When removed from the island Wells had in his possession United States and British flags, not Canadian flags as was first reported.

Commenting on the results of the Wrangel expedition, Commander Davidoff said: 'Raising the red flag on Wrangel Island is of the greatest importance to Soviet Russia. It terminates the efforts of imperialists to seize the island, on which they intended to organize a base for airplanes flying from the United States to Europe. The island would have made an ideal aerial base because it possesses a natural plateau.

'Wrangel Island is of the greatest importance to Soviet Russia economically. It is very rich in furs, sea animals, and fishes. Its forage is suitable for the establishment of deer breeding. It is not yet known whether it possesses rich minerals, as geological specimens gathered by the expedition have not yet been examined scientifically.'

(Toronto, Ontario, *Star*, November 19th, 1924.)

*

STEFANSSON'S 12 ESQUIMAUX HELD IN CHINA

Ejected from Wrangel Island by Russians; Appeal to Washington

BY JOHN T. LAMBERT

WASHINGTON, Jan. 1st. — Ejected from Siberia, destitute and helpless, the 12 Esquimaux surviving from those who were taken from Wrangel Island by Soviet officials are prisoners in China to-day.

This latest episode in the continued persecution of the band was reported in a cable received by Secretary of State Hughes from the American consul at Harbin. . . .

*

A Soviet ice-breaking ship, the *Red October*, took the Esquimaux from the island in last September, carried them past their Alaskan homes, and deposited them 1,000 miles south of Vladivostok.

The English consul there advised this country that the entire band, although penniless, was later ordered to leave Siberia. He said funds were needed for them. There were five women and five children in the party. One of the children died of tuberculosis. Captain Wells was reported to be desperately ill.

The cable received by Secretary Hughes states that they are in Manchuria, detained at Sui Fen Ho by the Chinese, who demand the assurance of payment of transportation expenses from China before they will allow them to proceed to Harbin.

How the Esquimaux reached Sui Fen Ho is unknown to the State Department. Earlier advices said that the Russian officials had ordered them out of Siberia. Wells is believed to be still in Vladivostok.

The State Department says it will take up their plight with the American Red Cross 'for the purpose of learning whether any relief can be obtained for them.'

. . . Because of its refusal to recognize Russia, the State Department is without official representation in Siberia. First advices of the destitute condition of the little band were received from consuls whom the Government of Great Britain had sent there to protect the interests of subjects of that country. . . .

(New York, N.Y., *American*, January 2nd, 1925.)

*

WELLS OF WRANGEL ISLE MET DEATH IN SIBERIA

American Citizen was Carried Off by Soviet Soldiery
Aboard Cruiser *Red October* and Shanghaied with Eskimo
Followers at Port of Vladivostok

A Russ Eye-witness Tells Inner Story

BY J. J. LARKIN

VANCOUVER, Jan. 22nd. — Graphic details of the Soviet expedition have been obtained from one of its members, Ivan Melynk, who recently returned from Vladivostok to Vancouver.

Melynk recounted how Moscow had secretly commissioned Captain B. V. Davidoff to command the expedition, with Captain E. Vovefdoff under him as navigating officer of the *Red October*. On board went a company of infantry as well as several meterological and scientific experts. The soldiery were to re-assert the Russian claim and to study the best means of fortifying the island, while the scientists were to investigate its suitability for agriculture and the production of meat.

Shortly after arrival on Wrangel, the Russians came upon

the American, Charles H. Wells, of Seattle, and his colony of Eskimo hunters and trappers.

The Soviet officials declared the colonists were operating on Russian territory without a licence and without other necessary authorizations. Accordingly the American-financed party was told it would have to leave Wrangel Island with the *Red October* when that vessel sailed.

It was Hobson's choice for Wells. Undoubtedly he believed that he would be provided with transportation to Nome or Seattle.

Instead, he was landed, with his surviving Eskimo followers, at Vladivostok. As the party's fur catch¹ had been confiscated, all were destitute.

Wells, being a citizen of the United States, appealed to the Government at Washington, and eventually some financial aid was sent to him.

But it came too late. For on January 9th this hardy adventurer and pioneer passed away in Vladivostok, an exile from his native land and a victim of hardship and pneumonia. . . .

(Toronto, Ontario, *Star*, January 22nd, 1925.)

*

WRANGEL ISLAND ESKIMOS RETURN; TWO CHILDREN DIE

Leadership of Wells Lauded – Colony Plans to Return to Home near Nome

VICTORIA, BRITISH COLUMBIA, Feb. 13th. – Eleven Eskimos . . . arrived here to-day on a Japanese steamer. The

¹ Another dispatch from Russia says the confiscated furs were 167 fox skins and 40 bear skins. Assuming these figures correct, and the quality of the furs about the same as those secured by Ada Blackjack in 1923, Mr. Carl Lomen values the foxes at £10 each or £1,670, and the bears also at £10 each or £400. The total value of the catch of Wells and his companions in one year should, then, have been well over £2,000, for there is sure to have been a good deal of ivory, sealskins, walrus hides, etc., besides the furs mentioned. This, Mr. Lomen figures, would show a very handsome annual profit on a business in Wrangel Island operated from Alaska.

eleventh was a baby born on Wrangel Island. Charles Wells of Uniontown, Pa., and Nome, Alaska, died in Vladivostok, Siberia. . . .

Two Eskimo children died, one in Vladivostok and one in Manchuria, whither the Russians allowed the colony to go after Wells died from pneumonia.

The Eskimos, who were taken aboard the Japanese steamer at Harbin, Manchuria, were proceeding to Seattle bound for their homes in Golovin Bay, seventy-five miles east of Nome.

'I do not wish to speak of the past,' said Peter, one of the Eskimos. 'I left my two little sons, Billy and Hope, in Asia. They will never come home. We have all been sad since we were taken from the island, but we hope to be happy when we are home.'

The Eskimos lauded the leadership of Wells. . . .

Peter and his companions said that under Wells they had built good homes of driftwood [in Wrangel Island], and had obtained plenty of food by killing bears and by fishing. . . .

(Indianapolis, Indiana, *Star*, February 14th, 1925.)

The following additional details, among others, were contained in a Victoria dispatch of the same date to the Toronto, Ontario, 'Star.'

'... There were no trees [on Wrangel Island], but there was game. Many bears roamed over the island, and these provided good meat for the colonists. There was also a profusion of fish in the sea.

'... It was Wells' ambition to obtain furs with which to start a profitable business in the Far North, shipping the product of the frozen lands into the markets of the south. But his ambitions were nipped in the bud. Before the little colony had begun to prosper and find their feet in their new homes, the Russian Soviet ship, *Red October*, came to the island. . . . Charles Wells and his party were taken prisoners aboard the Russian craft, and carried away from Wrangel to Siberia. . . .'

For a full understanding of the true story of Wrangel Island, Appendices I, II, III, and VII are important to fill in what has already been told. Appendices VI, VIII, IX, X and XI are of collateral interest, while Appendices IV and V are included in this book only to correct Mr. Noice's incorrect newspaper articles, and should therefore be ignored by all except those specially interested in that distressing tangle. Chapter XIV carries down to the time of going to press the narrative of developments known to us that are connected with Wrangel Island.

THE FRAGMENTARY PAPERS OF MILTON GALLE

AFTER the rest of this book had been written there came to light some fragmentary papers bearing on the period between July 18th and September 30th, 1922. That these had not been examined before was not through any fault of Mr. Harold Noice. In fact, it was he who brought them to our attention. Both in writing and speech he was known to have made several references to the 'diary' of Milton Galle, but at that time we supposed that he had this diary and was keeping it away from us together with the portions he had torn out of the diary of Lorne Knight. Mr. Carl Lomen made inquiries at my suggestion, and Mr. Noice told him that he had been referring only to some scraps of paper that contained little if anything of value. Then came Mr. Noice's published statement in the *New York World* of February 11th, 1924 (printed *ante*), which referred to the diaries of all four of the Wrangel party. We seized upon this as a valuable admission that there were in existence documents never heretofore acknowledged by Mr. Noice. On Mr. Lomen's inquiring from him again he denied that there were any diaries of Crawford or Maurer, but said that there had been a sort of diary of Milton Galle's. Later he wrote to Mr. J. I. Knight saying the same thing in substance and adding that he had handed over Galle's diary to Mr. Taylor in Toronto who must have it. I then wrote Mr. Taylor, asking him to make a further search of the boxes left with him by Mr. Noice – supposed by Taylor to contain only odds and ends having value merely as keepsakes – articles found on Wrangel Island. In response to this letter a search was made, and there was found a tin box about 3 inches by 4½ inches by 1 inch, half full of separate leaflets of paper cut to the size of the box. These were covered with fragmentary notes in part very difficult to decipher. The writing was faded, but that was not the greatest difficulty. There were single words and phrases rather than sentences, and abbreviations which obscured the meaning. The refer-

ences first deciphered seemed to be largely to the weather and therefore not of great importance.

I received the notes shortly before leaving New York for Australia with a letter from Mr. Taylor's office explaining how the box came to be overlooked. I put it aside with the thought that the leisure of a sea voyage might enable us to decipher the abbreviations and possibly to get out of them more than at first seemed likely.

On careful study it appeared that the notes were aids to memory which Milton Galle had jotted down as a basis for his more complete diary. The abbreviations may have been used partly because of his hurry in setting them down; or possibly the motive may have been in part a desire for privacy. He did not want the meaning of some of the entries to be obvious to anyone who might glance at them. When deciphered the notes give unneeded confirmation of many things that are really sufficiently clear from Knight's diary, but fragmentary as they are they also fill in a good many gaps which Knight left blank in the record. Especially welcome is their confirmation of certain parts of the verbal story of Ada Blackjack. These needed confirmation, because her truthfulness had been challenged both in Mr. Noice's printed statements and in his letters to the parents of Lorne Knight.

Since the connected story has already been written on the basis of the papers in our possession, we shall not attempt to make up a coherent narrative from Milton Galle's notes, but shall merely take up the most important items which he mentions that have not been mentioned by the others, and the most important confirmations of both Lorne Knight's diary and of Ada Blackjack's statement which she dictated to Mr. Jordan, and which is reprinted elsewhere in this appendix. We shall also mention certain confirmations of verbal statements made by Ada Blackjack to others than Mr. Jordan, statements which are not on record except in personal letters written to me by those with whom she talked in Seattle and Los Angeles.

Since Mr. Harold Noice has alleged that Ada Blackjack

was probably responsible for the death of Lorne Knight because of grudges she had harboured against him for more than a year, it is of importance to note that there is in Galle's record no indication of any friction with the Eskimo woman during the time covered. This, of course, agrees with Knight's own diary. Galle mentions with appreciation several things that Ada Blackjack did, and speaks of pieces of work where she assisted Knight, evidently by her own choice.

From incidental references by Galle in three or four places we have confirmation of what Ada Blackjack told several people, that he had occupied much of his time in writing, for he speaks of keeping two diaries. One he refers to as his 'notebook.' This was evidently kept in longhand. The other he speaks of as 'the loose-leaf,' and tells us that he occupied certain days in copying the written diary (the notebook) with a typewriter into his loose-leaf. This also confirms what Ada Blackjack has said in describing the outfitting of the three men when they eventually left Wrangel Island over the ice, for she noticed that they packed up and took along many diary volumes. We now think what an especial pity it is that, with Galle's diary being kept in duplicate, he did not leave on the island either the written or the typed copy. That he did not do so is, however, a welcome additional proof that when they were starting out they were not worrying seriously about the possibility that they might not reach Siberia safely.

With regard to the game on the island in the summer, 1922, we find in Galle's notes in the main only confirmation of what Lorne Knight's diary tells, although there are certain fragments of additional information. On August 21st, for instance, Galle records that they had seen fourteen bears, five of which were cubs. This is a larger number of bears than mentioned by Knight for any day that summer. The implication is either that he forgot to make the entry or else that Galle had not told him about these bears — possibly because they did not meet until Knight had already written up his diary for the day. Or possibly again he was only noting the number seen since some previous entry.

With regard to the condition and movements of the sea ice we get no additional information from Galle's notes, but they do throw a good deal of light on what the party were thinking about the ice. It seems that generally when the weather was thick so they could see only a few hundred yards from the beach, they concluded from the noise they heard of distant waves and from the motion of cakes along the beach that the ice was going away from the land or had gone away. But whenever the weather cleared they could see that the reasoning had been fallacious. A typical entry showing this is for August 23rd: 'I go for short walk . . . I could see ice from high places on tundra pretty sparsely strewn about two miles offshore; from there on an almost solid mass as far as I could see, about eight or ten miles.'

While there are many expressions that can be interpreted to show hope or expectation that the ice would go, there is not one suggesting worry in case it did not go. Had they been concerned about the food supply there would have been direct statements to that effect, or at least indirect evidence, such as records of energetic and tireless hunting especially whenever the weather was particularly good. The opposite is the case, for the mention of unusually good weather is generally accompanied by a statement that most or all the party remained in camp. Typical entries showing that are the following: August 25th, 'Sun out all day, snow disappears in a short time. Crawford prints pictures. All stay in.' August 26th, 'Weather good, sun out all day, wind west-south-west. About six miles of young ice along beach. Hear geese several times. Crawford develops films.' August 29th, 'Best day this year, calm most all day, sun out also though [temperature] not over 36° . . . Crawford prints pictures when I finish developing some films. Developed seven rolls . . . Crawford and Knight see northern lights shortly after midnight, stars visible some nights now.' September 29th, 'Weather good . . . all stay in; nothing attempted.' Several of these later entries were written after the party had given up hope of a ship coming in that year, as we know both from Knight and Galle. This last entry

mentions incidentally that the new 'sea ice [is] several inches [thick], enough to walk on.'

There is nothing in Lorne Knight's narrative that is so clearly confirmed by Milton Galle as the absence of worry during the summer. We have already quoted entries showing that on the best days most or all of the party usually remained in camp instead of hunting energetically as they certainly would have done on the good days had they been seriously concerned about a food shortage. But more convincing still is the record of the hours of sleeping and waking. The nights were already beginning to be dark late in August, and in September the dark periods were rapidly lengthening, for by the 20th of that month the nights are almost as long as the days. Yet we find that the habit of sleeping in the daytime and being awake at night, which is a common arctic summer custom and logical during the perpetual daylight, is still being kept up when that logic is gone. Sample entries are the following: September 12th, 'We got to bed about 6 A.M., thick fog then. Stayed [in camp] rest of the time. Shortly before midnight fog lifted and could see the mountains.' September 14th, 'To bed about 1.30 A.M., Maurer at 3.30 . . . Lit lantern about 6 [P.M.] to-day on account of darkness.' September 15th, 'I copied diary into loose-leaf with Corona, sat up till 1 P.M. I got up at 9 P.M., others up also.' September 16th, 'I go to bed at 4.30 P.M., others have been in bed since 7 A.M. All get up at 6 P.M.' September 18th, 'I go to bed 8.30 A.M., up at 12.30 . . . all stay in to-day.' September 21st, 'Bed 4 A.M., up shortly after noon.'

Galle seems to have been more interested than Knight in the cooking and in the rationing of the food. Consequently we get more information about that from his scattered notes than we do from Knight's fuller diary. This does not mean that Galle was any more particular about what he ate or more given to complaining. The only complaint is in the entry for August 24th. It is to be inferred that up to that time the main drink of the party had been tea. On that date Galle says, 'Coffee has taken place of tea; I don't like it.'

This cannot have been because the tea had really given out, for Knight mentions the use of it by himself and Crawford the following January. Perhaps they saw an approaching shortage, and wanted to save it for travelling, using the coffee when at home in camp.

It seems that from the arrival of the party on the island until August 14th of the second summer the cooking of meat had been uniformly in the Eskimo style – boiling. Even without records we would infer that this was so, for Knight and Maurer had been thoroughly converted to boiled meat on their previous journeys. Most people who live mainly or exclusively on meat in the Arctic come to the same conclusions, as has been shown by the experience of dozens of men on our various expeditions. But in August, as recorded also by Knight, Galle had been engaged in trying out the fat of polar bears and putting it in tins. On the 14th he thought he would fry some bear steaks. Evidently the party had tried this before, for Galle says that these steaks tasted a great deal better to them than those they had fried previously and that the entire party was converted to the excellence of bear steaks. The text of the entry which records the eating of the first fried meat is as follows: ‘Bet with Knight that President of U.S. gets a salary of \$75,000 a year plus travelling expenses of \$25,000 – \$5 bet. Weather fair with variable winds. All stayed in camp to-day. The bear meat I boiled for breakfast and fried for myself and Ada, did not taste like the previous bear meat. All had the boiled meat, even Knight, and all agreed to the taste. Crawford boiled some bear blubber which tasted good.’

But the unanimous favour of the steaks which resulted from the initial experiment did not last long, for on August 19th they had an argument about the comparative merits of boiled and fried meat. ‘Am tired of fried meat already; suggested boiling again. Maurer wants same, but Knight, Crawford and Ada still want the fried.’ There was vacillation for some time, but the last mention of steaks is August 31st, when they tried them again after several days of boiled meat.

Knight's diary tells us nothing about the rationing of any items of groceries to make them last longer as tidbits with the meat. But Galle has several notes on this subject. It seems that up to August 16th pilot bread was eaten as freely as anyone desired, both at meals and between meals. At that time one box of biscuit was lasting five days. 'Crawford and I have been dipping hard bread in grease all day long and seem never to get filled.' It may have been that this was the time when the party first began to plan a journey away from Wrangel Island the following winter. At any rate, something led them to the saving of hard bread, which is an excellent element of a sledging ration. However, we have no explanation from Galle but only the note, 'Have decided to stop eating hard bread after this box.' From that date they evidently kept their resolution until September 11th, 'Make the suggestion to Crawford to break out one box hard bread and to issue each day two to each [person] . . . making ten a day, one box lasting about twenty days. Advised frying [them] in [bear] oil. Crawford approves and we start to-day.' Evidently Galle was anxious that the rationing should be strictly adhered to, for on September 29th he complains that Crawford opened a box of hard bread two days in advance of the complete twenty-day period for which each box should have lasted at the rate of ten biscuits a day.

Although Galle's interest in the diet was greater than that of Knight as shown by the records left, it was not as great as we might wish who are anxious for every scrap of information. About the only other thing we know is that they made toffee several times. Apparently any one of them made toffee whenever he felt like it and made it in his own way. Galle records two occasions when he tried it and when the results were not satisfactory.

On August 18th Galle tells us about salting seal meat. The eating of the salted meat the following winter is mentioned in the diaries of Knight and Ada Blackjack.

It can be clearly inferred from Milton Galle's notes that through the period from their beginning, the middle of

July, until the last on September 30th, there was no rationing of any food element except hard bread. This is only in accord with every other line of evidence we have, and show further that the party were not feeling any worry on the score of food. Crawford's letter to me shows that he had thought of the difficulty of feeding the dogs during the dark days, but he had solved that in his own mind by the plan of taking them to be fed on the Siberian mainland where meat could be easily secured as a gift from the hospitable natives, or purchased with money.

The notes tell us what we also know from other sources, that as late as the end of August the party were not very particular (although more particular than they had been) to save all the meat they secured. The entry for August 30th, for instance, includes: 'I bring up one side of bear ribs this morning, pelvis and head, all that is left,' of some bear they had killed a little before, leaving the meat as they frequently did at the place of killing. Elsewhere in the notes we find that the seagulls and ravens were eating the meat that had not been promptly brought home.

Galle has more numerous references than Knight to the appearance of walrus on the ice. He speaks of them or the noises made by them nearly every day of the latter part of August and first part of September. He also gives us more details of the killing of the walrus. I had understood from Knight's diary that a large part of the walrus meat had been lost. The reason for my misunderstanding was chiefly that Knight tells in full only about the meat which they were able to save at the time of the killing. Much of the two animals they then left on the ice, and the rest of the story came some days later and failed to be recorded by Knight as fully as that of the first day. Galle tells it as follows :

September 6th, 'About four Maurer sees something on the ice looking like walrus meat. We launch the dory four-thirty. Get the meat, paddle around but cannot find [big] skin which we need most. Two bears have been there and eaten their fill. The gulls and ravens had almost picked the small skin clean. Arrive at camp at seven with one small

skin, most of small walrus meat and the rear flippers from the large one. Had some fried walrus meat. Very tough, otherwise palatable. A bear had been close to camp on the beach to the east.' He liked the meat better the next day, perhaps because it was differently cooked, for on September 7th he says, 'We had some boiled walrus ribs, very good.'

On September 18th there is confirmation of what Ada Blackjack told Mr. Jordan about Knight's complaining of illness during the summer. He mentions also that Crawford and Maurer were unwell. 'Crawford seemed very tired and worn, dragging his feet . . . Maurer continually complaining about his back, wrenched some weeks ago, and all complaining about being exceptionally sleepy.' These are possible symptoms of scurvy, which do not, however, seem to have developed further in any of the party except Knight. Apparently they were at this time living in considerable part on groceries which would have no antiscorbutic value. The meat they were eating was mostly bear and, since they were employing Eskimo methods of cooking, we may infer that the meat was being overboiled, for bear is about the only meat which the Eskimos commonly overcook. They are likely to boil any other meat about as underdone as our ordinary roasts, but bear they usually cook about as much as we do such things as beef briskets. We can, therefore, easily understand how scurvy might develop, for prolonged heating weakens or destroys the antiscorbutic vitamin. Apparently the disease was later checked in all the party except Knight by the decrease of groceries and the consequent compulsory larger dependence on meat and especially on seal and walrus, which are usually eaten underdone and would therefore have a much greater curative value than the overdone bear meat, in addition to any higher percentage of vitamin 'C' which the seal and walrus may possess. Ada Blackjack has told us that as autumn advanced they began to eat the meat of foxes and that all liked it except Knight. This gives some explanation of why the scurvy developed in him more than the others, but it is a very strange thing and

hard to believe, because Knight was already used to fox meat. Many of the men of our expeditions have eaten fox meat, and all those who have tried it have liked it after they got over their initial prejudices. So far as I can remember, Knight used to eat it with the rest of us the years 1914-18, liking it as we did.

The most important part of Milton Galle's notes (made so by later events) is what he says about the proposed trip to Nome, Alaska. We have confirmation here also of what Ada Blackjack has told about the way in which the party was managed. It had been the understanding when we planned the expedition the summer of 1921 that while Crawford was in command he was to be guided continually by the opinion of the veterans, Knight and Maurer. It was their own arrangement that Knight rather than Maurer should have the formal position of second-in-command. Ada Blackjack says that she frequently heard Crawford asking Knight what he thought ought to be done. There would follow long discussions, after which Crawford would announce to the rest of the party what his orders or plans were.

The plan of making a journey to Alaska seems to have been formed in this way, for Galle's first knowledge of it evidently came from chance remarks. About the only evidence of resentment in Galle's notes appears in this connection. He knew that plans were being formed but did not know just what they were, and when he heard that a journey was to be made he was not told the reason for the journey. This naturally annoyed him. We infer from the fragmentary notes preserved that his fuller diaries probably contained not only more about his annoyance but also what his speculations were as to the purpose of the journey. There is a suggestion that he made these speculations partly as a sort of game - he was trying out his cleverness to see how nearly he could guess what the explanations would be when they eventually were given to him. This was a habit he had with regard to other and less important matters. Examples of that are the conjectures we find in his notes as to where the camp would be located for the second winter. He puts down his guesses and

says that he will later record whether the guesses were right. He also made a forecast of the verbal form which the camp-moving announcement would take, and later recorded that his guess had been wrong and that the orders came in a form entirely different from what he had expected.

Galle's first reference to the trip ashore shows that he must have been hearing rumours of it for some time. The entry is for September 25th: 'If the mysterious dash is made — this is through careless phrases dropped by Knight, Maurer and Crawford — by Knight and Crawford to civilization, nothing more than justice to me, concerning camp and equipment.' This entry is comprehensible only after a careful study of the rest of the notes. What Galle seems to mean is that if he is to be one of those left on the island while the others make the 'mysterious dash,' then he should be consulted in choosing the winter camp site. He has told us elsewhere that he is in disagreement with the others as to where the camp ought to be with reference to the ease of hauling firewood. The reader must also remember that our quotation is taken from what Galle wrote only as fragmentary aids-to-memory, set down from day to day merely as the basis for longer entries to be made in his written and typed diaries.

The next mention of the trip to civilization is a part of a long entry for September 28th which tells about the moving to the permanent camp of that winter and ends with a record of a conversation when he and Knight were returning from the new camp. 'On way back Knight tells me that they, Crawford and Knight, were probably going to Nome next spring. He does not say why. He tells me they will need lots of money, asks if I have any. I will loan them all I have. Knight keeps the conversation pretty noncommittal. Of course, I could ask questions, but that is not up to me. I can figure their motives. Will note now that they will not go to Nome or even to Siberia. We shall await developments. Was informed by Knight he would not like to go but he *had to*.' [The italics represent underscoring in Galle's manuscript.]

I have tried to think what Galle can have supposed would

be the real destination of the proposed journey by Crawford and Knight. Possibly he thought it was all talk, and that when the time came they would not go anywhere. I am inclined to believe, however, he must have supposed they were really going on an exploring expedition north or north-east from Wrangel Island. The edge of the unexplored in that direction was only sixty or seventy miles away, and there had been some talk among us that they might make a journey out in that direction the latter part of the winter 1921-2. I have therefore been surprised both that they did not make such a journey and that Knight's diary has no discussion of why they did not. Likely enough this is one of the subjects which was frequently talked about but never got mentioned in any diary that is preserved to us.

But what they probably had more in their minds than the exploration of an unknown area to the north was the definite report by Hadley, McKinlay and others who said that they had seen a large new land to the north-east of Wrangel Island and had watched it from Waring Point during the summer of 1914 while the snow gradually disappeared from the slopes under the influence of the sun.¹ Maurer had not seen this land, for he had been at Rodgers Harbour at the time, but he had heard all about it from the party who were at Waring Point. Likely enough Galle may have feared that they were going to steal a march on him, leaving him behind on Wrangel Island while they distinguished themselves by the discovery and exploration of a new land.²

We infer from the underscoring that Galle was especially puzzled by Knight's telling him that he wished he did not

¹ The testimony of Hadley and McKinlay on this subject along with McKinlay's drawings of the land seen, was published in the *Geographical Review* of the American Geographical Society, 1921. We are reprinting the paper in the Appendix of this book to show the reader what foundation Galle had for his inferences, and what ideas about new land to the north-east, which they might be able to explore, were in the minds of the rest of the party.

² After the publication of the Canadian and American editions of this book, I received a letter from Mrs. Harry Galle, the mother of Milton Galle, saying she and Mr. Galle differed with me slightly on the interpretation of cer-



JACK HADLEY AND FRED MAURER JUST AFTER THEY WERE PICKED UP AT WRANGEL ISLAND.

C S K I N S S E A H B D U C K S
F L Y B Y E S H O O T N O W O R K

13176008921

(S.N.V.V.) Supply Lost

WIND W. 11 M. S.E. PM

MORE CINDY FISSEL

13 E D 4 P.M.

IVORY AT LEAK

1945 IN DON TUSK 1/2

IN RIVER BOTTOM

LOWER JAW WALLS

INTUNDIR. C. THINGS

BACK OF JUNE TO

15 A ST

Two ridge poles set up
two to cross and kitchen tent.
uprights 4 feet ridge 26

reflects plant - of 60 ridges

Chirpueen Tob. Co.

about 30 odd, after 11 1/2 long

ridges 4 ft apart; down to face of

South. Location, no (see

I thank you very much for the letter.

own reason. I understand M-1-

3/4 in. le W samples for
probable, must

rise of the strong W wind
wave strong W wind
wave strong W wind

the way back
lets me
labelly going to room

They ^{are} ^{not} saying why.

needs - I will need lots of money
tells me - I will need lots of money

as if I had any. Well, you are

LEFT—SPECIMEN PAGE OF THE MEMORANDA KEPT BY GALLE FROM WHICH HE LATER WROTE UP HIS REGULAR DIARY, AS DESCRIBED IN THE TEXT. RIGHT—PHOTOGRAPH, ENLARGED, OF A PAGE OF GALLE'S NOTES ON WHICH HE BASED THE TYPED DIARY WHICH HE MENTIONS AND WHICH ADA BLACKJACK HAS DESCRIBED. THE LAST LINES SHOW HOW THE NEWS OF THE PROPOSED TRIP TO NOME FIRST CAME TO GALLE. TRANSCRIBED, THESE LINES ARE: 'ON WAY BACK K(NIGHT) TELLS ME THAT THEY C(RAWFORD) AND K(NIGHT) WERE PROBABLY GOING TO NOME NEXT SPRING. DOES NOT SAY WHY. TELLS ME WILL NEED LOTS MONEY. ASKS IF I HAVE ANY. WILL LOAN ALL (I HAVE).' THIS ENTRY WAS MADE UNDER DATE OF SEPTEMBER 28, 1922.

OF SEPTEMBER 28, 1922.

have to go on this journey but that he *had to*. We can think of two reasons for Knight's saying this. It may have been that he felt he would rather not leave the island but that he would have to be a member of any party that left because of his greater experience in travelling over moving ice. Or perhaps Knight had in mind the illness of which he could already then feel the symptoms. That would confirm what Ada Blackjack says about his having been frequently ill after his hard journey across Skeleton River when he had to swim on his way back. But that interpretation is opposite by Knight's own frequent statements that when he knew he had scurvy he knew also that the scurvy could be cured with raw meat. He would thus have no reason for leaving the island in search of a medicine for that disease. Knight himself tells us in his diary that he felt the scurvy symptoms in November and discussed them with Crawford at the time. Perhaps that may be a slip of memory on Knight's part, and that he really felt the illness already in September.

When everything in Milton Galle's fragmentary notes has been deciphered, interpreted and pondered over, we are left

tain points. I wrote her at once, asking for an explicit statement which could be incorporated in future editions. In reply she wrote as follows:

NEW BRAUNFELS, TEXAS,

May 4th, 1925.

DEAR MR. STEFANSSON, —

I will hasten to answer yours of April 30th, which came yesterday. I wish immediately to make myself understood, and am very glad to tell you where our opinions differ. This should be of no consequence, for I thought it only natural we might differ on some subjects.

Where we differ I will gladly tell. On page 325 (where you discuss Milton's entries of Sept. 25th and Sept. 28th), these words occur: 'Likely enough Galle may have feared that they would steal a march on him, leaving him behind on Wrangel Island while they distinguished themselves by the discovery and exploration of a new land.' We believe he thought they were going nowhere, not exploring, nor that they would venture a trip to Siberia. We think he calls it 'a mysterious dash' because of the secrecy of it by the others, and also believe the word 'mysterious' is used because he does not think such a trip advisable, and couldn't understand why they would attempt it, for the danger of it. . . .

This is our disagreement, if I should call it so.

with an intensified feeling of what a pity it is that he did not leave behind on Wrangel Island at least one of his two apparently almost duplicate diaries, and what a pity it is that Crawford and Maurer left nothing. Still, we may well be glad that this was so. It is only our curiosity that is balked, and we have for recompense the knowledge, made clearer than it could be through a mere inference from an understanding of arctic conditions, that none of the party had more fear than ice travellers always do that serious accident or death would meet them between Wrangel Island and Nome. Had the danger been considered very grave, certainly duplicates would have been left behind. Had the danger been thought extreme, the members would have stored all their most valued records on the island both for the safety of the information and to lighten their loads, for in a desperate situation every pound of burden may count. While we are deploring the uncertainty of many things we must remember the consolation there is in that very fact. That Crawford and Maurer took with them all their records, and that Galle took away even duplicate records, shows, as we have said elsewhere, that death must have come with the suddenness of a railway accident or a shipwreck; not anticipated, except as we all anticipate dangers whenever and however we travel by land or sea.

APPENDIX II
ADA BLACKJACK

The Story of Ada Blackjack

STATEMENT

DICTATED IN SEATTLE, WASHINGTON, FEBRUARY 6TH, 1924, TO
E. R. JORDAN, BY ADA BLACKJACK¹

STEFANSSON sent an exploring party to Wrangel Island. They arrived in Nome, Alaska, September 1st, 1921, and were looking for a seamstress to take along with them. U.S. Marshal E. R. Jordan introduced me to Mr. Crawford, who was head of the Expedition. During their short stay in Nome they chartered the boat *Silver Wave*. The Commander's name was Jack Hammer, who had spent many years in the Arctic waters.

Before we left Nome I bought some sinew, needles, thimbles and some linen thread. We left Nome about September 9th, 1921, and arrived at Wrangel Island September 16th, 1921. On our way to Wrangel Island we stopped on East Cape to get some sinew and white seal skin; we also bought a small Eskimo skin boat.²

When we got to Wrangel Island the land looked very large to me, but they said that it was only a small island. I thought at first that I would turn back, but I decided it wouldn't be fair to the boys. Soon after we arrived I started to sew. We brought some reindeer skin coats, and all I had

¹ In this statement Mr. Jordan has preserved the slightly foreign diction of the Eskimo woman (who had been brought up in an American mining town). We print this statement rather than her diary, for it is more complete, without contradicting anything in the diary. She dictated it before she or anyone knew that Mr. Noice was going to publish or otherwise make any accusations against her. As stated elsewhere, Mr. Jordan had been an almost lifelong friend of Ada's. It was he who engaged her on Crawford's behalf to go to Wrangel Island.

² This was a boat smaller than a umiak. We know from a letter written by Frederick Maurer to his wife that the boat was lost on the voyage towards Wrangel by being washed overboard from the *Silver Wave*.

to do was to fasten the hoods on to them, for it was very cold and the boys needed them to go about in.

They used to haul lots of wood to get wood piles for the winter. They made the frame for the snowhouse for winter, and about the last part of October they put the snow blocks in. We were living in a tent at first and it was rather cold.

When spring came in 1922 we saw some geese and ducks; then we had some good meat. That spring the boys got over thirty seals and over ten polar bears. Not many of the bear skins could be used, for the weather was so damp and we had no way to dry them, so only one or two were saved.

The summer 1922 Mr. Knight took a trip to the east of our camp, about sixty miles. On that trip he said he crossed a river called Skeleton River, which he had to swim across. He said it was quite a large river. After he came back the other three boys left to take the same trip. After his trip Mr. Knight was never well, complained of a sore back, and said he felt weak. When Knight took the trip he took a dog along to carry his small things. While the other boys were away Mr. Knight killed a big polar bear, but we didn't touch the meat, for we didn't care for it because we had ducks and geese and brant. After the boys came home, Maurer said he was going to fry some of the bear meat. I never cared for it before, because it tasted strong, but in that summer of 1922 the bear meat tasted fine — it tasted just like beefsteak to me, for we had had no meat for some time. Galle fried some of the polar bear blubber and got one barrel, one coal oil tin and one twenty-five-pound lard tin full. This oil is very good.

Later on they killed another polar bear, and oh! he was so fat. Then they saw some walrus out in the broken ice. They went out after them and got two of them. They had a great deal of trouble getting the meat to shore. They couldn't get the boat up to where the meat was, so they took a sled and put the meat on it, and when they were crossing two ice cakes the sled got between the ice cakes and tipped over. They spilled all of the meat in the water, but they saved some of it, but not all.

We were expecting a boat every day that summer (1922) because sometimes the ocean clears out so that the boats can come in. The ice goes out but comes in again.¹

About the middle of November we moved up to the west of our present camp, about four miles, I think, so they wouldn't have to haul the firewood so far. After we arrived in our new camp I started to sew skins for the two boys, Knight and Crawford, who were going to take a trip to Siberia. They were preparing the rest of their things and helping to haul wood so the other boys would not have too much to do after they left.

At Christmas time we had some salt seal meat and some hard bread and tea for our Christmas dinner. That time when we had dinner I wondered where I would be if I lived until next Christmas. After Christmas, about January 8th, the boys, Knight and Crawford, left for Siberia. They came back about January 21st. They were only gone about thirteen days, for Knight became sick and they had to turn back. When they got back Knight was very sick and weak. Then they talked about the other three boys taking the same trip to Siberia and Knight said it would be better because the three boys could make a snowhouse easier at night than two boys could. So about January 28th the three boys, Crawford, Maurer and Galle, left for Siberia. They promised that they would come back after they got to Nome, with a ship, and if they couldn't get there with a ship they would come over with a dog team next winter. They left with a team of five dogs and a big sled of supplies.

After they left I started to do some trapping. For about one week Knight seemed to be getting along all right. He could chop a little wood, but after a week he had to bring some wood in the tent to chop, and while chopping it he fainted and

¹ Here we leave out a paragraph about weather conditions, ice action, etc., since the information only duplicates what we have printed elsewhere in this book on the authority of Knight's and Galle's diaries. Ada's statement has been edited only by omissions or by changing Eskimo or other words into equivalent expressions comprehensible to the reader. There have been no additions or other alterations that change the meaning or general effect.

was unconscious about five minutes. He was so weak that I told him he had better stay in bed, that I could chop the wood and bring in the snow for water. I told him I was used to chopping wood and doing that kind of work down home, so he finally consented to let me.

I went out to Maurer's trap line. Before he left he had given Mr. Knight his trap-line map. When I went out the first day I only found about six or seven of the traps, but later on, about three or four days afterwards, I found the rest, but there was no fox in any of them. I trapped for about a month, but I never caught a fox. When I was out I was afraid of meeting a polar bear, and every little while I would turn and look around to see if one was in sight, and if there had been one I would have fainted, for I only had a snow knife with me and I didn't know what to do to defend myself, for I never carried a rifle when out on the trap line.

I went out every day for I knew I had to get something to eat, for Knight was sick and we had nothing in the tent. I just got weak from tramping around and I thought I would give it up, but one day I noticed some fox tracks around one of the traps so I dug the trap out of the snow, for in setting the fox traps up there you bait them and then cover them with a little snow. But I must have covered them too much and that is the reason why I didn't get any fox. Then I baited it again and just left it on top of the snow, didn't cover it up at all. The next morning I got up and looked out and I saw a fox. I didn't know for sure if it was in the trap or not, but I dressed and went over and sure enough it was a white fox in my trap and that was the first one I had caught, and that was on February 22nd, 1923. After that I caught some more. In March I caught quite a few; one day I caught three.

Later in the spring, around April, the foxes got very scarce and I couldn't trap any more at all. After I couldn't get any more foxes Knight became worse. He got very faint every time he moved. I forgot to tell you that none of us had ever eaten a white fox before [we came to Wrangel Island] but I remembered of reading in a book that the people up north

said that they were very good to eat, so when we caught the first one we tried it, and liked it very much.

Around about May, I think, I took a walk across the other direction towards the small islands in the harbour, and a seagull flew over my head. I had brought a shot-gun with me this time, one that belonged to Knight, and I took a shot at it with my gun and killed it. I took it home and made some broth with it for Knight, for he could eat very little. That was the first bird I ever shot with a shot-gun. I have shot them with a twenty-two rifle down home but never with a shot-gun.

Around in February when he first got sick Knight gave me his Bible which belonged to his grandfather.

During June, about the first week, I took a walk to the west of our camp, and when I was coming back across the harbour I noticed some seagulls along the beach and I wondered what they had. I thought perhaps it was some walrus meat or something like that. But when I got there I found they were building a nest and I found one egg. I tried to kill some of them but couldn't, so decided not to waste any more time. I had one egg for the night anyway. While on the rest of my way home across the lake, some white geese flew over my head. I took a shot at them and they went on for about one hundred feet, then one of them dropped and I was glad. So when I got home I called to Knight, 'Look what I got.' He opened his eyes and said, 'What is that, a seagull?' I said, 'No, it is a white goose and one seagull egg.' He wanted to know if the egg was fresh and I told him it was warm when I found it. So I fried it for him but first I had to break it into a cup to show him it was fresh. I cooked the wild goose until the meat fell away from the bone.¹

¹This is a pathetic entry. According to our views developed in treating scurvy cases on previous expeditions (including Knight's own case in 1917), scurvy can be cured by fresh meat *if eaten underdone or raw*. Similarly, raw eggs would have antiscorbutic value. Knight was of this opinion, yet he does not seem to have protested against Ada's cooking the meat and eggs. Perhaps he did not at this stage suppose his illness was scurvy – and possibly it may not have been.

About three days afterwards I went back to the place where I had found the egg and found nine more in the same nest, Knight ate those eggs while he was living because he couldn't eat meat on account of his throat being so sore. He was so weak that I had to hold his head to give him a drink of water. I made a canvas bag and filled this bag with hot sand to keep his feet warm. Every morning and night for two months I heated this sand and put it to his feet.

About three or four weeks before he died I had to make a bag from oatmeal sacks and filled it with cotton to put under his back because he said it was so very sore. He told me that if anything happened to him, if he was to die, to put his diary and some papers he had written in his trunk, and that I would find the key to his trunk in his trousers' pocket. He also told me to look after his camera and rifle, be sure and keep them dry. I don't know how many times he told me to be sure and care for his camera and rifle.

About the day before he died I knew that he couldn't last much longer. He was unconscious, and I was standing looking down at him and the tears were in my eyes, for I thought he was going to die. He looked up at me and said, 'What is the matter, Ada?' And I told him that I thought he was going to leave me. I just couldn't help but cry for I knew he wouldn't last until the boat got there, and then I would be all alone. He told me to try and get along some way until the boat arrived.

He died June 22nd, 1923. I found him dead the next morning after he saw me crying. I don't know what time he died, but some time in the night. After he died I wrote a letter to Mr. Stefansson and told him what day, month, and the cause of Mr. Knight's death, because I thought something might happen to me, then they wouldn't know what happened to him, because a wild animal or something might get me before the boat arrived. I also wrote a letter to Mr. Galle who I thought was in Nome, Alaska. I left the letters in the typewriter, so if I was not there when the boat arrived they would find the letters and know of our deaths. I left Mr. Knight in the tent, for I could not bury him, and I

moved into another one that we had used mostly for storing things in.

Three days after Mr. Knight died I got a seal, and about a week afterwards I got another seal. I shot those with Knight's rifle. So one day I went out again. It was July 4th (I made a calendar out of typewriting paper cut into small pieces — I had one for 1922 but I had to make my own 1923 calendar which I still have in my trunk). When I went to get my third seal I was crawling and crawling along on my stomach to get up close enough to shoot it, and I was just ready to aim when it moved so that a large ice cake extended in front of me and between me and the seal. So I was moving around to get a better aim, and I had my finger on the hammer, and in moving I must have pulled it down and bang! went the gun and down went the seal into the water and I didn't get any meat.

The beach was only a few yards from the back of my tent. The third seal I got I went out and about two hundred yards out from the beach on the ice was a seal, so I went out to take a shot at it and I got this one. It was so far out that I knew that I couldn't get it to the tent without something to help me. So I went back to the tent and got a line to pull the seal with and then started after my seal. I was nearly to it when I looked up and saw something that looked just like a yellow ball coming towards me. Finally I realized it was a polar bear and I was four hundred yards from my tent. I turned and ran just as hard as I could until I got to my tent. I was just about ready to faint when I got there, too. I had built a high platform at the back of my tent and I climbed up on to this and took my field-glasses and watched the bear and her young one eat my seal, at least I thought she did anyway. It finally got dark and foggy so I decided I had better not take a chance and go after it that night so I waited until the next morning. I went out and took a look, but my seal was gone; all that was left was a few blood marks. The old mother bear and her young later came up to about one hundred and fifty yards from the tent.

One day just after I had cleaned my second seal I heard a

noise just like a dog outside of my door and I looked, and about fifteen feet from the tent was a big bear and a young one. I was very scared but I took my rifle and thought I would take a chance. I knew if I just hit them in the foot or some place where it would only injure them a little they would come after me, so I fired over their heads and they turned and ran a little ways and turned and looked as if they would come back, so I fired five more shots at them and they ran away for good then.

One morning after I had built a fire I opened the door and I found a large polar bear track right in the doorway and I went out and looked and he had been all around the tent. I had a twenty-five pound lard tin of oil outside of my tent and about three days after the first bear had been there another bear came one night and ate all of that tin of oil.

Not very long after that the boat came. It was one evening about the 19th of August. I was making my lunch or supper. I heard a funny noise like a boat whistle but thought it was a duck or something. It was foggy and I couldn't see, so I didn't think any more about it until the next morning. I took my book after supper, for I couldn't go to sleep until I had read awhile, then I went to sleep. The next morning about six o'clock I heard that same noise again and it sounded more like a boat whistle this time so I grabbed my field-glasses and went out on top of my platform, and sure enough there was a boat and the master and the people were walking around on the beach. I had only some tea for breakfast that morning, for I watched the boat to see if they were going to come up to my camp. I thought it might be just a whale ship. I didn't know what to do, but finally the boat started up towards my tent. I went down to the beach to meet the boat, and the master which was a native came to me and asked me where the rest of the people were, and I told him there were no more, that I was the only one left. I didn't know what to say to him, I was so tickled. I told him that I was alone, that Mr. Knight had died and that the others had gone to Siberia, and asked

him if he had not heard from them in Nome.¹ But he said that Stefansson had sent him after us, so I told him they were gone, that I was the only one left. The next day they buried Mr. Knight, for I told them that I had not.

We stayed there about two or three days. They were unloading the boat. They had brought a lot of supplies for the people that are up there now. They had brought supplies for two years but were only supposed to stay one winter.

As soon as I saw some of the boys from Nome on the boat I asked them how Bennett, my little boy, was, and they said he was fine. I had left him in Nome in a Home where he had been for some time before I left on this trip.

Very respectfully,

MRS. ADA BLACKJACK

Character Sketch of Ada Blackjack by Inglis Fletcher with an Introductory Note by Vilhjalmur Stefansson

My first meeting with Ada Blackjack was in Seattle, January, 1924, when two members of my 1913-18 expedition, Aarnout Castel and August Masik, brought her to see me at a hotel. During the next few days I saw her several times, usually either with some member of one of my expeditions or with Mr. E. R. Jordan, her before-mentioned friend of long standing who had employed her on Crawford's behalf to go to Wrangel Island. There was also in Seattle her sister, married to the half Eskimo young man, Fred Wolki, who had been a member of my expedition for a year, 1917-18. Ada's eight-year-old son, Bennett, was always with her.

At first Ada had very little to say and I thought her reticence temperamental, but once when I happened to be alone with her for a while she began to talk freely. I have since come to realize that she will talk openly enough to

¹ In telling me the story Ada said her first question had been, 'Why is not Mr. Galle with you?' She said she used his name, though she really meant to ask about all three, because it was only her own idea that the others were coming back, while Galle had specifically told her he was coming.

almost any sympathetic person if they are alone. What seems to trouble her is not so much the presence of others as any conversation that may be going on between them. She is also curiously inhibited by definite promises which evidently she did not quite understand when she made them to some one before leaving Nome for Seattle. She had promised, for instance, that she would not sign her name to anything. Evidently the person who extracted the promise meant that she was not to sign any agreement or contract ; but Ada did not understand it so and accordingly refused to autograph photographs of herself which she gave to friends, her reason being that if she did that she would be breaking her word. She had also promised not to answer questions. Occasionally she does forget this prohibition if the question is artfully put, but a direct interrogation from practically anyone will stop her suddenly. But if you sit receptively silent she will talk on for hours. Anyone who understands Eskimo views of life will realize that this is no indication of lack of intelligence on the part of Ada Blackjack, but only shows her idea of how promises should be kept. Partly there is also a blending of ancient taboo ideas when punishment through illness or accident was believed to follow quickly on the doing of any forbidden thing.

Perhaps because of my official relation to herself and the Wrangel Island expedition Ada talked with me freely and openly whenever we were alone. She did so at times also with the parents of Lorne Knight when she was visiting them at McMinnville, Oregon ; but they say that occasionally she would suddenly stop talking and remain silent for considerable periods. I imagine this may have been when they asked her definite questions. Her stopping when questions were asked seemed suspicious to some people, as if she were trying to hide something. However, if they had only waited a while and let her talk uninterruptedly they would have found her answering of her own accord the very things they had asked. She did not mind revealing the facts ; it was only that she had promised not to answer questions.

Of all the people Ada Blackjack met in the United States she probably talked most freely to Mrs. Inglis Fletcher. That may have been partly because they were naturally sympathetic, but I think it was largely because Ada's son Bennett and Mrs. Fletcher's boy were not very different in age and had both been seriously ill. Ada's one concern in life is Bennett, and Mrs. Fletcher's sympathetic interest in the boy won her completely.

When I saw them in Seattle, Bennett had been in the hospital but was not entirely cured. There were tubercular lesions on his neck and chest. The approved treatment for superficial tuberculosis nowadays is to go practically naked in the open air, but that cannot well be done in cities. Being just a boy, Bennett naturally liked to play in the open, and being an Alaska boy, his greatest interest was in dogs. It happened that Mrs. Fletcher was about to leave Spokane, Washington, by way of Seattle to visit friends in Hollywood, California, in whom Bennett was more interested than in any other people in the world, for they are the owners of the 'wonder dogs' Strongheart and Julie and of a multitude of other dogs and tame wolves that Bennett had seen in the movies. The dogs were on a farm outside Hollywood. It was just the place of Bennett's dreams and also ideal from the point of view of his physician, for there the boy could roam with the dogs almost naked in the sunshine, having the best of times in the best of places for curing his disease.

Mrs. Fletcher was willing to take charge of Ada and Bennett if I gave them a trip to Los Angeles. Ada was at first reluctant to go farther south, for her most passionate longing was to get back to Alaska and she did not like the idea of getting any farther away from Nome than Seattle is. But when I told her about the effect of the sunshine on Bennett and about the dogs on my friend's farm, she became eager to go. However, she changed her mind about half a dozen times between that day and the sailing date—sometimes she was definitely going, and at other times decided with equal definiteness that she would go to no place south of Seattle. The day before sailing she was not going ; so

that her next change of mind to go arrived opportunely and she was aboard the steamer before she could change again.

On the steamer from Seattle to Los Angeles Mrs. Fletcher and Ada became such friends that I am sure Mrs. Fletcher understands her better now and knows more about her than anyone south of Nome. I have, therefore, asked Mrs. Fletcher to write the character sketch of Ada Blackjack, which is printed below.

VILHJALMUR STEFANSSON

Ada Blackjack's experiences on Wrangel Island belong to times far back—primitive times when the instinct to survive was coupled with the ability of each human being to fend for himself. In those days hunting and trapping wild animals was part of everyday life. Living was stripped down to essentials and it was only because of skill in these things that it was possible to combat the elements and prove man's supremacy over the animals by out-thinking them. Nature was cruel and untamed—living was hard and women were as skilled as men in the tasks that had to do with the daily struggle for existence.

Yet the story of Ada is modern. Only last September the daily papers the world over told of the rescue of an Eskimo woman, the sole survivor of Stefansson's Wrangel Island Expedition. Her story is almost without parallel in our times. What makes it so remarkable is that Ada, although a full-blooded Eskimo woman, was not any more equipped by training or previous living to go through the experience she had, than any white woman used to out-of-door living.

Ada was educated at a Mission School at Nome. She was used to the comforts that people have these days in any northern city. She did not have the background of tribal living. The only knowledge she had that made her valuable to an expedition was skill in sewing on furs, for she had earned part of her living in the city by making skin winter clothing for sale to the miners who traded there.

We are likely to think of the Arctic as a man's country. Only one other woman's name has been linked with the far

north to any extent. That is Lady Franklin – the wife of the British explorer, Sir John Franklin. Strangely enough Lady Franklin was never in the land that owes so much to her interest. She was a woman of indomitable will which she turned to a single purpose. Through her efforts ship after ship was sent out from England into the Arctic to find some trace of the lost Franklin expedition – and solve the mystery of the death of her husband. She kept alive the interest in the fate of Sir John for years and the Franklin search was finally successful. They found relics of the ships and the journal of the Commander. The search itself added greatly to our geographical knowledge of the Arctic.

It seems a far cry from Lady Franklin, a product of a highly civilized time, to the so-called primitive Eskimo woman, Ada Blackjack.

Yet the same determination – the same single purpose was present in them both. In Lady Franklin, love for her husband was behind years of effort to unravel the mystery of his death, and justify his expedition. In Ada, left alone, love of her son kept her at her task of living – the same determination, the same steel-like quality and iron will kept these women to their self-appointed task. The force behind Ada's will to live was her mother instinct. She was determined to get back to Nome to see her five-year-old boy, Bennett.

So each, in her own way, worked for a single purpose – with no dissipation of energy, and in this lay their strength and success.

A curious coincident is in the fact that Captain Kellett, who was the first European to see Wrangel Island, was then in command of one of the ships of the Franklin search, sent out mainly through the efforts of Lady Franklin. So the history of these two women touched for a brief instant; two women who lived so many years apart – who were so unlike – and so alike in will and determination.

Ada's situation at once suggests Robinson Crusoe – but Crusoe had his man Friday. Ada, toward the end, had no one. After three of the men had left the island to go over the ice

to Alaska by way of Siberia, her one companion was a sick man who died months later. Then she was alone on an island in the Arctic Sea – an island comparable in size to Jamaica. The nearest land was Siberia, a hundred miles away, across the ice floes.

What she did to keep herself and her companion in food, the things she learned to do in order to live, seems to me a story of simple courage and fortitude that is almost without parallel in modern times.

Contrary to popular opinion, Ada is in no way a Lady Robinson Crusoe. In looks and in tragedy she is more like a Madam Butterfly. A pathetic figure, watching eagerly day by day for a ship on the horizon. Not a ship bearing her lover, as did Puccini's heroine, but a ship to take her back to Nome and her little boy.

One can imagine the change in her; from a state of bewildered helplessness to the steel-like strength that later characterized her. When she had almost given up hope, when her desire to live (when it was so much easier to die) was at a low ebb, she came to the conclusion that she must get back to Bennett. She made up her mind to live – and to use her own words 'I said to myself I must stay alive – I will live – I will not let Bennett have stepmother.'

From then on she had no thought excepting the business of living and the care of the sick man Lorne Knight. She hunted and trapped; she learned to shoot. She, whose experience with a gun was limited to shooting at a target with a twenty-two rifle, was forced to depend upon her use of a rifle and shot-gun to keep herself alive.

These things she managed to do because the instinct to survive is the deepest and strongest instinct in the human mind. Add to this the strength of the mother instinct and you have the basis of Ada Blackjack's character.

In September, 1921, Vilhjalmur Stefansson sent an expedition consisting of four men to occupy Wrangel Island which the British had discovered in 1849 and had claimed again in 1914 when the men from the *Karluk* of the Stefansson Expedition of 1913-18 raised the British flag. The last

expedition was sent to make positive the earlier claim by occupation, it being thought that the island might fall into hands other than British or American. The Japanese were then trying to penetrate the North and the Russian Soviet Government was beginning to realize the value of the Island, which lay off her northern shores. It was dawning on many men in various countries that ultimately when transpolar air commerce became a fact, Wrangel might prove a valuable air base.

The expedition started from Nome in September and was in command of a Canadian, Allan Crawford. Two of the men, Frederick Maurer and Lorne Knight, had spent many years in the Arctic. Maurer had been on the island a few years previously. The fourth member of the party was Milton Galle, a novice, but deeply interested in the adventure of Arctic living.

At Nome Ada Blackjack was engaged as seamstress of the expedition. The plan was to take an Eskimo family, the man to hunt, his wife to help Ada with the making of fur clothes. At the last this family failed to appear and the boat was forced to sail without them.

Ada was very skilful in sewing furs. In the Arctic fur clothes are necessary to the comfort and health of an expedition. The usual articles of dress are the Eskimo fur coat, fur trousers, and the skin boots.

The Eskimo skin boots are made of seal with such skill that they are waterproof. The work is done by the Eskimo women. They sew the soles to the tops with a sinew thread so artfully that the seam is waterproof even without being greased. The whole process requires great skill and labour.

When Ada was asked to go with the expedition she refused at first. She had never been so far away from her people. Her boy was in a children's home and she wanted to be near him. But the money offered her seemed a large sum. She could save enough in two years to take Bennett out of the home and have him with her — there might be enough to take him down to Seattle to a hospital where he could have special medical care and have a chance to grow well and

strong, as other children. So she decided to go with the expedition.

The party was landed at Wrangel Island without difficulty. The ship that took them returned to Nome and they were engulfed in the silence that belongs to remote and far-off places.

The following year Mr. Stefansson sent in a ship with extra supplies. The ice was late in breaking up that year; the ship could not get near the island, so she returned to Nome. No anxiety was felt for the party. They had planned from the beginning to live by hunting and there was known to be game on and near the island.

The second year the *Donaldson*, a power boat, was sent to Wrangel to bring out the men of the expedition if they wanted to return.

The ice broke early. The ship reached Wrangel without any serious difficulties. When they arrived they found that Ada Blackjack was the only member of the expedition alive.

Crawford, Maurer and Galle perished by some unforeseen accident on their journey to the Siberian Coast. A tipping ice cake – or the breaking of thin ice – are possible reasons for their deaths. Trips of the same length and difficulty are ordinarily made in the Arctic in from ten to twenty days.

Ada told of the death of Lorne Knight. She had stayed behind to care for him. He was too ill to undertake the journey even if it had been the plan to leave the island unoccupied.

She nursed him to the best of her ability until his death the following June.

Then she took up the work where the men had left off. She had noticed that they all kept diaries. So she kept a diary. She wrote down the daily happenings and her own thoughts. As a human document, her journal is almost without parallel.

Early in the autumn Ada left Nome for Seattle. She had not given up her idea of taking Bennett to a hospital to make him well, and her coming caused a good deal of interest among the newspapers and people who had followed her story in the papers.

In appearance she is a tiny creature, weighing under a hundred pounds. She has a slim delicate body and a well-poised head with a mass of straight blue-black hair. Her complexion is olive — fine grained with a faint flush of red under the skin. She is distinctly Oriental in appearance and she is constantly taken for a Japanese.

Her dark brown eyes are habitually enigmatic — closed windows — for she is a reserved person.

There is an effect of deep silence about her; the sort of silence that belongs to people who are used to being alone. Yet at times she is as gay and light-hearted as a child.

She is shy and sensitive — she watches new people with a certain aloof distrust. She says very little to strangers, sitting quietly — listening with her head half turned, with an oblique glance of her eyes.

Her voice is low pitched — contralto in quality. Her English is expressive, but she shows by the placing of words and the construction of her sentences that she still has the habit of thinking in Eskimo rather than English.

When she attempts to talk to more than one or two people at a time, she grows confused and returns to her usual state of vast silences.

Her little boy Bennett, on the contrary, talks constantly, asking innumerable questions about all the new things he sees everywhere about him. After asking many questions, he is quite likely to burst into some graphic description about his life in Nome, such as, 'I have a reindeer; I can ride on his back — when I want him to go fast, I slap him with my hand and he will run very fast so I have to hold on to his horns.'

Ada often says — 'Bennett, why do you ask so many questions? I never ask questions. Even when I was a little girl, my mother said "Ada never asked questions."'

When she was left alone on the Island with Lorne Knight, she realized she must hunt for two as he was almost helpless. They were short of meat, and that was very much needed if Knight was to get well, but big game was scarce. Ducks began to appear over the Island, and Ada took a gun and

tried to kill an eiderduck. Her shots went wild and she was alarmed at the result. 'I thought to myself, I must not waste ammunition – I must learn to shoot.' She set up a target for practice. The gun was heavy and the recoil bruised her shoulder. She made a gun-rest and learned to shoot, so she no longer felt the kick of the gun. Practice every day made such improvement in her marksmanship that one day she shot an eiderduck through the head. When she told this, some one remarked that it was a real test of skill – 'But I didn't aim for eiderduck's head,' was her answer, which shows something of her keen sense of humour. Another example of the quality of her humour was in her answer to Stefansson, when he asked her why she couldn't kill a polar bear, when she could hit an eiderduck in the head – 'When I shoot at eiderduck, my gun stays steady; but when I shoot at polar bear, my gun shakes in big circles.'

Her fear of polar bears has an interesting aspect. When she is induced to talk of her experiences (which is not often) she never speaks of any other fear than that she would be devoured by a bear. She never complains of cold – the loneliness – of death – but she seems to have been in constant terror of bears. Behind this is something psychological. The Eskimo has a deep-seated fear of the polar bear based on some old racial superstition. Many of their folk tales deal with polar bears that can become human beings at will.

These stories she has been told by her mother, who in turn has heard them from her mother, and so on through many generations.

The Eskimos have no written language. The storytellers keep alive the traditions and legends of their race.

Ada, in her childhood, heard these tales. In the long winter nights the storytellers would gather a group of people about them, and by the light of the seal oil lamps, tell of the heroic deeds of men of ages past. The Greek storytellers centuries ago did the same thing, and to-day we have the Odyssey. So the literature of the Eskimos is kept alive by the spoken word.

'Being eaten by a polar bear and in its belly,' became an



KNIGHT WITH A MAMMOTH TUSK FOUND ON WRANGEL ISLAND, WHICH MUST ONCE HAVE BEEN A FAVOURITE GRAZING GROUND FOR THESE PREHISTORIC ELEPHANTS.



SAWING FIREWOOD—MAURER AND PROBABLY KNIGHT.



ONE OF THE STOUT TEAM OF ALASKA DOGS WHICH ACCOMPANIED THE PARTY TO WRANGEL ISLAND. PICTURE TAKEN IN 1922.



ADA BLACKJACK REMOVING BLUBBER FROM A SEALSKIN.



ADA BLACKJACK AND VIC ON THE DONALDSON.



ADA BLACKJACK IN WINTER COSTUME.

obsession to Ada — but even this very active fear did not keep her from hunting.

To wake up in the morning and find two bears, a mother and an almost full grown cub, standing outside the door of her tent, sent her crouching behind her bed in an agony of fear. 'I said to myself, what shall I do — what shall I do? If I shoot the mother bear and only wound her, she will get me — If I shoot the cub, she will be angry and eat me up — What shall I do? So I shot in the air and frightened them away.'

In order to have a place of retreat from the bears, she built a platform above her tent. This was a laborious task. She dragged the boards and placed them on four uprights, nailed the planks securely. It was cold and she had to work 'without mittens.'

She was not very strong, or skilled at such work, but it was something that had to be done, so somehow she managed to do it.

There never seemed to be any negative sense in Ada. Certain things must be done, therefore, she did them. She made a skin boat to hunt walrus when they came in near the island. Each problem in living that presented itself, she mastered somehow, the mistakes she made one time, she didn't make a second time.

The bears were her enemies in reality, as well as imagination — for the first seal that she killed was eaten by a bear.

This was almost a tragedy, for her meat supply was very low and she knew she must have fresh meat to keep from having scurvy.

One day not long after the death of Knight she shot a seal on the ice. She crept up as near as she could, wriggling up cautiously on her stomach, pretending she was another seal, for a seal is very suspicious of every moving thing, and will slip quickly into the water and out of sight in an instant.

When she was near enough she shot it in the head. It died instantly without moving, so that it did not slide forward into the water.

She was very happy, for to an Eskimo a seal means every-

thing – oil for lamps, lean and fat meat for food, and skin for clothing.

As she was engaged in cutting up the seal, she looked up and saw in the distance a moving yellow speck on the ice. It was a polar bear coming toward her. Frightened, she ran to her tent, and from a safe distance watched the bear tear to pieces the seal she had shot, and drag away her food – ‘But, I am glad it is not me polar bear eats.’

Once she said, ‘I do not write about bear in my “dary” for if I die and some one reads my writings and my mother knows about it, she will always believe that I am eaten by polar bear, and in his stomach – no matter how I die, she will think polar bear eats me.’

In Seattle she saw many strange things. Elevators frightened her at first, but she overcame that fear. The first days at a hotel she stayed in her room afraid to go out – then she ventured into the street but she feared she would get lost, so she walked round and round the block for exercise, never going out of sight of the hotel.

She felt the damp cold in Seattle very much and had cold after cold that made her miserable, ‘and I never had cold on Wrangel – and there it was sometimes forty degrees below zero.’

She is a very feminine person – she likes clothes and new hats. She dresses in good taste, dark blue suits and blue flannel blouses. She found out by some means that she could go to the juvenile department of a store and get clothes to fit her that were much cheaper than grown-up clothes.

She and Bennett liked the pictures. Bill Hart and his horse interested them very much, Bennett shouted aloud at the comedies – like any boy – and he was thrilled by the adventures of Strongheart, the dog hero, among wolves and villains.

In February, Ada was sent to California for a trip, it being thought that a change in climate and the warm sunshine would complete Bennett’s cure. Going on such a long trip, into another strange country seemed quite an undertaking,

but Ada decided to go when she was told that the change would help Bennett, who was now out of the hospital, though he was pale and thin and quite weak. Bennett is always Ada's first and last thought, now he is all she has. The maternal interest in her is very strong, whether it is the strength of the so-called primitive woman, or whether it comes from the fact that Ada has only a few interests, and her energies and affections are not dissipated in many directions, as are those of the more highly civilized women.

Her affections do not overwhelm her or allow her to spoil her boy by indulgence. He is a very well trained and lovable little fellow, bright eyed and eager, getting much enjoyment out of every new thing. She watches him constantly and if she thinks he is talking too much, her low spoken 'Bennett' brings him instantly to her side.

Her manners are charming, she has a gentle reserve and poise that anyone might envy. In new surroundings and among new people and unaccustomed things, she carries herself with dignity. She takes pride in her appearance and in keeping Bennett looking well.

There is something appealing about Ada. People find themselves wanting to do things for her. On the boat going down to California, people wanted to talk to her and hear about her experiences. She was very shy about talking to strangers, and answered questions in as few words as possible. It was next to impossible to induce her to talk about Wrangel.

Reporters found her very difficult. She would not talk or have her picture taken. She seemed to have an instinctive knowledge of the presence of newspaper people, and she would take Bennett by the hand and retreat hurriedly to her cabin, and there she would stay until the ship was safely out of port. This led to complications and amusing incidents, because Ada had definite news value. One irritated reporter who failed to get an interview wrote that 'Ada Blackjack and her half-breed son, Johnny Blackjack, arrived to-day on the *Emma Alexander*. She refused to be interviewed and

talked in a native dialect, though she is said to speak English.' As a matter of fact Ada had said nothing.

Another reporter gave up the task after he had waited, he said afterwards, for fifteen minutes for an answer to his question, 'Were there many wild animals on Wrangel Island?' After the lengthy wait, Ada said 'A few.'

As far as she was concerned, she had nothing to say of sufficient importance to cause such pursuit of her. She was never a heroine to herself. She was not given to thinking much about the part she played in the tragic history of the Wrangel Expedition. She did not want to talk for several reasons. Her native reserve and suspicion of strangers – and because she wanted to forget the experience that made such a deep impression upon her, as she said – 'because it always makes me have a choke in my throat and tears come to my eyes.' She wanted to forget – her feeling in that was not so different from that of the men who had gone through such tragic experiences in the World War. They did not want to talk – they wanted to forget – if they could. It was like that with Ada.

She was happy to be back – to her boy – and her mother and her sister, to talk about Wrangel was to remember the men who had been kind to her – and who were – dead. But she dreams of Wrangel – and wakes up – frightened.

Piecing together her story is like laying an intricate mosaic pattern – a bit of colour here and there until the design comes out – the building of a personality through actions and reactions.

From time to time she would make some comment or tell some incident that had to do with her care of Lorne Knight during his last illness. One thing in particular that she offered to do for him seems important because it typifies her attitude toward the men in charge of the expedition. They were alone on Wrangel. Maurer, Crawford and Galle had left for Siberia. Knight was already at the stage where he was in bed continuously. The food they had to eat did not satisfy him – hard biscuit – and fox soup. Ada herself was ill. She said she could scarcely drag herself to the traps

in the short time that daylight lasted. She remembered that a little soda and salt put in water was good for a sick stomach – she drank this herself and it helped her, so she told Knight about it. He did not want to take it. ‘Did you insist on his taking it, Ada?’ she was asked. ‘Oh, no – but I thought that some time Mr. Knight he would say to me – “Ada, bring me some soda water” – but he never did it.’ Later she repeated this story. ‘Why didn’t you insist on his taking it since you knew it was a good remedy?’ ‘Oh, no. I could not tell white man what to do – so I just said nothing, but I would like to have him drink it – for it helps me.’

‘Knight would not eat fox or take fox soup. Early in the fall before he was ill and when other men of the expedition had trapped fox and ate it saying they liked it – “It smells too strong” is what Knight says – “I can’t eat it.”’

One day in the autumn, Ada had overheard Knight tell Crawford he thought he had a touch of scurvy, long before he was really ill and before the men went to Siberia. He had large blue spots on his limbs and on his gums – before the end all his teeth fell out. He grew very weak so she would hold his head to give him a drink or to feed him eggs of the sea-gull; that was not long before he died.

Galle’s trap line was about three miles long. Ada would go out to look at the traps; many times so weak she could hardly make it – hurrying back to chop and split wood for fires and get snow to melt for water, while daylight lasted – for she kept fires continuously. Later she couldn’t do the three miles – so she set the traps in a circle around the camp to make less of a trip. Then there were not so many foxes. Finally Knight did eat fox saying he was surprised it tasted so good. She ate the head and little bit of kidney, saving the rest of the fox for him.

When he grew helpless she made little pillows of cotton to put under his shoulders and hips when he got so thin – and bags of canvas – these she filled with hot sand each night, to slip around his body to keep him warm. She always placed a fresh cup of water on a box at his bedside in case

he should want a drink in the night. If the fire went out this would freeze over the top in a little time so she would put a pen-knife he had beside the cup so he could break through the ice if he wanted a drink.

She came to a realization then that he was very ill – ‘he was white – white like paper – I knew he was going to die’ – she said, her eyes filling with tears.

She was asked if she ever studied nursing in the Mission School. ‘No – only I have had two little babies that died – I take care of them when they are sick – so I say to myself “Ada, Mr. Knight is sick now just like a little baby and I will take care of him just like my own little babies that are sick and die.” ’

She read to him from his grandfather’s Bible. ‘Ada,’ he told her, ‘when we get back to Nome I am going to give you this Bible.’ ‘I wanted very much to have that Bible – and well – then his mother gave it to me later when I visited her in McMinnville, Oregon. That makes me very happy.’

Once when she was putting her fox skins into stretchers he was lying in his bunk watching her, he told her she was doing it all wrong – ‘white ladies want wide skins, and you must stretch them as wide as you can – you are stretching them long.’ She told him – ‘some native men who got skins have been telling me to make them long in the stretchers.’ ‘That’s not right,’ he told her. ‘White people who live outside like them wide.’ ‘I didn’t say anything,’ Ada said – ‘because I had never been outside and did not know, but natives tell me this was the way.’ Her skins she tanned with the claws on – the men of the expedition cut the claws off of theirs. When she came out she had fifteen fox skins that brought her over £100 in all.

She saw the first seal about two weeks before Knight died – it was out on the ice quite a distance, a small speck; she went out after it – ‘crawling on my belly’ about three hundred yards. She fired at it – but missed it, and it went into the water – when she went home Knight told her she was too far off from it. About two weeks after his death she shot her first seal. This time she got within one hundred and

fifty yards and used a soft-nosed bullet – Knight had told her not to use soft-nosed bullets, to save them for polar bears.

She made one exception to her rule of not talking to newspapers. An accusation had been made by Mr. Harold Noice in a newspaper interview that she did not take proper care of Lorne Knight. She read the article carefully. Once she caught her breath sharply, but otherwise she made no sound. When she finally looked up her eyes had that dumb hurt look that belongs to a wounded animal. After a long time she said:

‘Well, maybe white people could do more – maybe people would think I did not do enough, but I did all I knew how to do – maybe no one believe me – but I cannot help that. I did all I know how to do.’

The next morning, without consulting anybody, taking Bennett with her she went into Los Angeles. She went directly to a newspaper office and told her story. She must have made an impression, for the next morning’s paper contained a long and very sympathetic account of Ada Blackjack.

‘When I got to thinking about what they are saying about me, my throat chokes, and tears run from my eyes like water in the river when ice melts – and I think I will walk up to newspaper office and say a few words.’

Two letters she wrote while she was in California show the range of her emotions – from a certain childlike gayness and pleasure in amusements to a deep and warm sympathy for a friend.

DEAR N: Just a few lines – When I got down at the Beach yesterday I went all over the pier and see all kinds of enimal and I see dried dead man and the native man eat fire and walk on glass with his bare feet, and I saw smalle cows two of them the man that owns them tell us some young man have found these two cows out on the mountain, and Bennett have ride on one of these marry-go-round, and he said lots of fun to ride on them. Well, it’s very nice down here.

Well good luck to you from yours very truly,

MRS. ADA B. JACK

DEAR — : I am very sorry to hear your father is not expected to live. When I came back from Los Angeles and that lady at this hotel told me about you going to see your father, and hand me the notice, I just felt upset for while.

I hop he will get well and I am very sorry not to see you before I leave and say good-by because we may not see each other again in this worold and I thank you for being so good to me and Bennett while we were down here.

I shall never foregit this trip as long as I live.

Very truly,

MRS. ADA BLACKJACK

There is no moral to Ada's story; there are no heroics. She was determined to get back to her child. In order to go to him she must remain well and strong — in order to be well and strong she must eat — to eat she must trap and kill. The whole thing was a circle that revolved around two central ideas, the maternal instinct and the will to live. These traits are the main forces behind the lives of primitive women, as well as those in our so-called highest civilization. Ada had no illusions about the task that confronted her when she was left alone on Wrangel Island. She set about equipping herself to surmount all obstacles in her path. The business of life from day to day was a big enough problem to engage her entire will and energy. In the accomplishment of her task Ada developed a genius for living.

APPENDIX III

THE REPORT OF CAPTAIN JOSEPH BERNARD ON
THE RELIEF OPERATIONS OF 1922

NOME, ALASKA,
Sept. 22nd, 1922.

MR. RALPH LOMEN,¹
Nome, Alaska.

DEAR SIR, —

I wish to give you a detailed report of the attempted voyage to Wrangel Island.

We left Nome [in the auxiliary schooner *Teddy Bear*] on August 20th, 1922, at four o'clock P.M. There was a south-easterly wind, which was in our favour, which continued all that night.

The next morning we ran into a heavy north-western wind, and we had to pull into shelter at Cape York, where we stayed all day.

On the 22nd we left Cape York at eleven o'clock A.M., and got as far as Cape Prince of Wales. It was my plan to go to Point Hope and take what is known as the 'Outside Passage' to Wrangel Island, but the northerly wind delayed us — we could not 'buck' it.

While we were at Cape Prince of Wales the schooner *Sea Wolf* came down from Kotzebue and reported that all of the ships that had gone north on the Cape side were in the ice most of the summer at Point Hope and around there, and that the ice conditions were unusually bad.

On the evening of the 23rd, at eight-thirty P.M., the north-

¹ This report was addressed to Mr. Lomen because he had acted on behalf of the Stefansson Arctic Exploration and Development Company, Ltd., in engaging Captain Bernard. Most of the statements in the body of the book regarding the voyage of the *Teddy Bear* towards Wrangel Island in 1922 are made on the basis of this report. There are some, however, which are based on another longer report which Captain Bernard dictated in answer to questions asked him when he visited New York the following winter. We are not publishing the second report because it is longer without being more complete, and unavoidably repeats itself a great deal because of the questions to which the replies were being made.

western wind was still blowing, and I decided to cross the Straits and take my chance on the south of the ice along the northern coast of Siberia, or in other words, what is known as the 'Inside Passage.' When we got to East Cape the gale was still blowing, and I decided to go into the East Cape Station and wait for a change of weather. Three or four miles of ice laid off the East Cape.

On the morning of the 24th at eleven o'clock A.M. the wind moderated, and in company with the *Olga* we rounded East Cape and entered the ice. Just at this time a south-easterly gale blew up, which gave us a good many uneasy hours in pulling through the ice, but we made for the land at Unikin. From there on we had no difficulty with the ice, as the southerly gale had blown the ice off shore. I was rather in hopes that the gale would continue, as it gave us free open water along the coast.

On the evening of the 25th the wind suddenly changed to the north-west. The ice pushed us in and we had a little difficulty in getting around Cape Serdze. We stopped there for the night, as we did not consider it safe to travel in the dark. On account of ice conditions we stayed here until the morning of the 28th.

On the morning of the 28th we began to push our way through the ice, the wind had moderated, and we had no more difficulty until we reached Cape Onman. Here we were delayed one day. However, we reached Cape Wankarem on the 28th, but could not go around the Cape, as the ice was pressed up against the point. There was open water along the coast north of the Cape, also south, but the ice pressed against the end of the Cape's point for a distance of about two miles. We got one-half way through and there stopped for two days.

On the second day the trading schooner, *Amy*, from Nome, which had passed Wankarem a couple of weeks earlier, came back from the north, stating that they had got within fifteen miles of Cape North, which had been their farthest point west. They reported that the ice from Wankarem north was solid pack, the outside was like we had found in

East Cape and Wankarem. They also reported that the schooners, *Chukok*, *Silver Wave*, and *Blue Sea* were frozen in the ice fifteen miles off Cape North.

Captain Larson, of the *Amy*, advised me that it was very unwise to pursue farther. With this information I felt convinced that it would be useless, and even dangerous to attempt to go farther along that coast.

After a hard struggle with the ice — we had to pull the vessel with tackles, cut our way through the ice for a mile — we got back to open water south of the Cape and made our way east. We experienced much difficulty around Cape Onman. After we got through we landed on Koliutchin Island. This island is quite lofty, and on a clear day one can see a great distance, in every direction. No water could be seen except along the coast to the east. Looking north and north-west it appeared to be a solid pack, while to the north-east the ice seemed to be broken up, although there was no open lead. I then decided to come back and wait until I could find some lead to enter the ice and see if I could not get across to the 'Outside Passage.'

On September 4th we reached Cape Serdze, in the evening, and from the top of the Cape we could see an open lead, leading north through the broken ice. I decided to wait until morning and if weather conditions permitted would enter this lead and see if it were possible to get across the belt of ice.

At daylight, on the morning of September 5th, we entered what had been the open lead the night before, but was now covered with ice; still, we were able to make fairly good time, as the wind was to the south and we used sails, as well as the engine. We soon found that the young ice was cutting into the plank, above the iron sheeting, pretty badly, and we tied up to an ice field and put on some iron sheeting, and in a couple of hours were able to continue our outbound journey. By dark we had made a little over forty miles. Then on account of fog, and the ice being pretty tight, we tied up.

The morning of the 6th was bright and clear, and we

started on our way at daylight. By two o'clock we came into a fairly wide open lead, possibly about five miles wide. There was no ice to be seen to the East, but across the lead on the north side, to the north-west, there was a solid arctic pack of very much thicker ice than we had been going through. Our position then was fifty-five miles west of Cape Serdze. There were leads of open water inside of the main arctic pack and the shore ice lying to the west – north-west – but they were very narrow and I did not consider it safe to enter those leads with a heavy pack of ice on either side of me, particularly at this time, as the wind had just sprung up from the north-west and the ice began to close in.

By this time the expedition party¹ suggested that they would rather turn back than take any chance of going any farther. I was perfectly satisfied that I would be taking too many chances by going farther.

We had a great deal of trouble in getting to Cape Serdze, as the north-western wind was pressing the ice and we had to press the vessel quite hard to break the ice in many places. The vessel suffered some damage by being stove in and also the propeller was bent, both blades hitting the ice, so that it was practically disabled.

We experienced very much more trouble in getting back to East Cape than going up; in fact, we could only make an average of about eight to ten miles a day along the coast. It was only during a slack tide that we were able to make any headway at all. In several places we had to haul the vessel over rock.

We got down to Whalen on the 17th. We were all this time getting down there – a distance of sixty miles.

On the 18th we came around East Cape, where I tried to dispose of the cargo, rather than bring it back to Nome, but the natives could not purchase, and the traders had their winter supplies, so that I was compelled to bring the supplies back to Nome.

¹ These were some men employed by Lomen Brothers on our behalf, and intended to take the place on Wrangel of any of the men there who might want to come out.

We left East Cape Station on the morning of September 21st. After going through two miles of ice we came into open water and crossed the Straits. We arrived in Nome at three o'clock on the morning of September 22nd.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) JOS. BERNARD

Critics have said, and the feeling was at one time in the minds of some of the relatives of the Wrangel party, that the tragedy of the next year might have been prevented by Captain Bernard who, they assumed, might have reached the island if he had tried harder. There have always been at least two good reasons against this view. Captain Bernard is an experienced navigator with courage tempered only by the necessary caution born of long familiarity with the ice, so that on his record we would expect him to do his best. The second reason that convinces us he did all he dared (and therefore all that was safe) is that he had an arrangement with us by which he would receive double his charter fee if he succeeded in reaching the island.

Part of the feeling that Captain Bernard might have reached the island in 1922 had he kept on trying until later in the season, came from a press statement by Mr. Noice that he found evidence in Knight's diary that ships could have got through in October, 1922. But unless this evidence may have been in the paragraphs erased which no one but Mr. Noice has seen, Knight's diary really shows that he and his comrades gave up hope of a ship by the last week in September, and that the hope never revived in their minds. When there was open water near the island later, they saw in it (so far as we can judge from Knight's diary) no sign that a ship could come — they evidently either considered the season too late for a ship to be away from port in that part of the Arctic, or else they supposed the open water they saw was only local — not extending far from the island. Probably they held both views. There is, therefore, nothing in the records on the basis of which we can rest the conclusion that Captain Bernard was wrong in turning back when he did.

THE VICISSITUDES OF THE WRANGEL ISLAND DOCUMENTS

[These are the remains of the original Chapter 10 of this book, after it was edited to conform to the understanding with Mr. Harold Noice when we accepted for publication his explanation and apology – see Chapter 10.]

THE chapter on the vicissitudes of the Wrangel Island documents and on the painful circumstances connected therewith was written at a time when we had a case to establish as well as a story to tell. The arguments and proofs have at the last moment been made almost unnecessary by the retraction and apology of Mr. Harold Noice, the author of that misleading press account of the Wrangel Island tragedy which we are here attempting to replace by a narrative really based on the expedition records. Unfortunately, his retraction does not make this chapter wholly unnecessary for several minor reasons and two major ones. (1) We have evidence that the original newspaper account made so widespread and firm an impression that nothing but a thoroughgoing exposition of evidence and motives can remove it. (2) While Mr. Noice has retracted those portions of his original story which had the greatest historical and scientific importance, he has not retracted other portions which have vital significance with reference to the character of some of the Wrangel Island party. Since the retraction was not complete, it is impossible to destroy completely the reasoning and evidence necessary to remove Mr. Noice's unretracted contentions from the readers' mind as thoroughly as they would have been removed had he himself withdrawn them.

Should this book be read by some one who either did not see Mr. Noice's newspaper story or upon whom it made only a slight impression, we suggest and even urge that the rest of this chapter be omitted, for it is desirable whenever possible to keep untarnished by even association with the disproof of serious, though unfounded, charges, the simple and creditable story which Lorne Knight has told in the diary upon which we base the narrative from Chapter 11 to the end.

To those who read this chapter we must apologize for its fragmentary nature. This book was already in type and about to go to press when Mr. Noice, through his lawyer, offered us a retraction, explanation and apology which would serve to make unnecessary for us the presentation of extensive evidence, and the deductions therefrom, to prove that in his newspaper narrative of the Wrangel Island tragedy certain things stated as facts were not facts and certain important opinions and conclusions therein were either unwarranted by the evidence or directly contradictory to it. The date of publication had already been announced and a delay was disadvantageous to the publishers. We agreed, nevertheless, to hold up the book and to omit evidence of a certain type aggregating many pages and to rewrite others. This was not only laborious and expensive, but certain to impair the unity of a book which should, of course, in the first place have been a simple narrative of a romantic and tragic adventure, but which, through the force of circumstances, had had to be written in part as an exposition and argument to disprove Mr. Noice's widely circulated newspaper story, and to remove from the public mind the firm and unfavourable impressions which we knew had been created by it. As against these reasons for allowing the book to stand as originally written, were the advantages of a retraction both to us and to Mr. Noice. For us the advantage was that to some minds no disproof can be as conclusive as an explicit retraction by the originator of the account that has to be discredited. To Mr. Noice the advantage was that he could present along with his retraction such explanation and apology as he cared to make and through which he might hope to receive from the public a verdict less severe than otherwise.

Although we have removed or rewritten perhaps half of the present chapter, we have not found it practicable to tone it down into the mood which we might have had if Mr. Noice's retraction had been in our possession before we commenced to write. We have said already that we hope that a considerable number of our readers may omit this chapter. We want to urge upon those who read it that in their own minds they soften, as they read, the harsher statements and implications. By turning to Mr. Noice's signed statement in Chapter 10 of this book, they can see that he gives the explanation that what he said and did was influenced

by his then being on the verge of a nervous collapse. The reader should keep this charitably in mind to soften the record of what Mr. Noice actually said and did. We accept that explanation partly because we know that his conduct for six months after his return from Wrangel Island differed markedly from what we knew to be normal to him before. But perhaps even more conclusive is a second reason. If you go thoroughly into what he said and did you will realize that any normal person would have refrained from such conduct, for he would have recognized that it would in the end injure himself most seriously. This is our final and conclusive reason for accepting Mr. Noice's explanation of nervous breakdown.

In so far as it was mechanically possible within the time allowed, we have removed from this book everything made unnecessary by Mr. Noice's retraction. Unfortunately, we have nevertheless been compelled to retain certain things that must hurt him. We have done this only where we felt that the memories of the dead would otherwise suffer, or else that a very important historical or scientific issue would otherwise be clouded.

Whenever we are compelled to establish the incorrectness of anything published, and not yet retracted by Mr. Noice, we are doing so not to accuse him but only to defend those whom he has accused.

The situation unfortunately cannot be fully understood without a brief summary of the career of Mr. Noice, explaining at least how he came to be in such control of the documents of the men who had died that he was enabled to publish his account of the alleged mismanagement and incompetence of the Wrangel Island party, with the relatives and friends unable at the time either to prevent or contradict.

Mr. Harold Noice ceased his education in the middle of high school and, after various vicissitudes, undertook at twenty a motion picture enterprise which led him into the Arctic and finally made him for two years a member of one of my expeditions, as related in my book, *The Friendly Arctic*. He came to New York in the spring of 1922 with a large ethnological collection which he hoped to sell for

enough money to support him in New York for a year or two while he was writing up the story of his adventures. I had told him that I thought he could dispose of the collection advantageously to the American Museum of Natural History or to Mr. Heye's Museum of the American Indian, and I did all in my power toward that end. Surprisingly, there seemed to be almost no market in New York or elsewhere. The collection as a whole was not salable. Limited selections from it were sold, but the prices were inadequate.

By the spring of 1923 Mr. Noice had completed the manuscript of a book which was eventually published both in London and New York.¹

Mr. Noice's situation in New York had now become difficult. My own expenditures in supporting the Wrangel Island expedition were heavy, and there did not seem to be any remunerative work to which he could immediately turn. It struck me that if I were to place him in charge of the supply ship going to Wrangel Island this would give him a certain amount of prominence which might enable him later to lecture profitably. Before sailing for England in May I broached this subject and found, as I expected, that Mr. Noice was eager for the opportunity. I told him I could not make any definite arrangements then because I had not the money to send him from New York to Nome. I was hoping to secure funds in England, however, and would communicate with him by cable either direct or through the Toronto office of our company.

As the summer dragged on without any financial success for me in England, my business associate, Mr. A. J. T. Taylor, of Toronto, cabled me offering personally to pay the expenses of Mr. Noice from New York to Nome in order that he might be on hand there to take charge of a ship in case I

¹ As we go to press there has come to hand an advance copy of this book. It covers some of the ground we do in the present chapter and elsewhere. It shows how facts and theories appeared to Mr. Noice himself before he suffered the mental changes we are about to describe – for the book passed out of his control before the changes took place. The title is *With Stefansson in the Arctic* (London and New York, 1924).

could later get money in England and cable it direct to Nome. I accepted this offer by cable, although we could have saved the passage money by employing in Nome (through Lomen Brothers who had done such things for us previously) any one of the many sailors available up there who were in our opinion as capable as Mr. Noice of taking a boat to Wrangel. But, as said, we wanted Mr. Noice to have the advantage of the expected publicity to help him get a lecture job later, and both Mr. Taylor and I felt willing at that stage to invest a little more money in his future.

We come now to a section of this chapter which I print with greater reluctance than any other. Indeed, I have decided several times to remove it from the manuscript, but each time it has been reinstated. Mr. Noice's subsequent conduct cannot be understood by me, and therefore presumably not by the reader, without some appraisal of his mental processes and motives. We must, therefore, discuss two illnesses which he suffered, and must relate what Mr. Noice himself has said and implied about the feelings of injury and anger which developed in his mind. These are among the few motives known to us that go to explain — inadequately, it is true — some of his strange actions later.

Here have been omitted several pages of text made unnecessary by the signed retraction and apology from Mr. Noice, received just before going to press, which admits in essence what the deleted paragraphs proved, giving as reason for what he did that he was then on the verge of a nervous breakdown. See his own statement printed as Chapter 10.

When the *Donaldson* returned to Nome from Wrangel Island the tragic story she brought percolated through the community, and somehow got on to the cables, so that the first news received by the world was a brief statement unauthorized by Mr. Noice or by anyone connected with our company, and also partly at variance both with the cable later sent to the newspapers by Mr. Noice and with the facts as we now know them.

I was in England September 1st, 1923, when the news arrived. One of my first thoughts was that, while the truth

must not be suppressed, it was important that we prevent, as far as possible, the ordinary distortions which the Press is accustomed to give to any events that happen in remote regions under conditions not familiar to the average reader. I knew even before the details came out that freezing or starvation was not likely to have played an important part, but I knew equally that the Press always assigns any polar tragedy to the routine reasons of hunger and frost. Their doing so now would go a long way towards making fruitless the work for which our young men had died. The diaries and expedition records have since clearly established that my premonitions were correct, but I was unable to influence materially the version conveyed by the Press to the public because the form in which Mr. Noice sent out his narrative made my views of its meaning continue to seem unreasonable.

Five weeks after the news of the tragedy I sailed from England, still without information as to why the statements so far given out by Mr. Noice were at variance with what I felt must necessarily be true. On landing in New York on October 15th, 1923, I soon acquired a distressingly clear understanding.

From my previous personal relations with Mr. Noice and the cables I had sent, I expected him to be among those to meet me when the steamer landed. Instead, I was met by my associates, Mr. A. J. T. Taylor and Mr. John Anderson, who had come down from Toronto to give me an immediate and personal explanation of the incredible tangle in which we now found ourselves.

The gist of the story as given by Taylor and Anderson was that Mr. Noice had arrived in Toronto, bringing back a few odds and ends that he had found on Wrangel Island, and certain diaries, papers and photographs which he said were all he had recovered. There were letters to myself and to the relatives, several hundred photographic films, some fragmentary papers of little significance, and a diary kept by Ada Blackjack on Wrangel Island after Lorne Knight had become unable to keep his. But outranking everything else in importance was the diary of Lorne Knight from the landing at

Wrangel in 1921 until shortly before his death in 1923, when he had become too weak to write. The diaries of Crawford, Galle and Maurer had been taken with them when they left Wrangel Island in January, 1923, and Mr. Noice believed they had been lost with them. It was deplorable that these diaries should have been lost; but even more deplorable was what Mr. Noice told Taylor and Anderson about the contents of Lorne Knight's diary. In spite of the pain and shock the alleged revelations gave them, they did not at the time question the correctness of his summary and did not examine the diary.

The sum of the statement was that in addition to general information covering the two years, the diary contained unbelievable revelations with regard to the relations of the four men and Ada Blackjack. Mr. Noice said that he had already torn out of the diary and segregated the pages containing these revelations. It seemed strange at the time that the pages had been torn out, but under the strain of hurry and worry nothing was done about it except that Mr. Taylor said to Mr. Noice that I would decide what was to be done when Mr. Noice handed over the expedition papers to me. Mr. Taylor expected this would be in a week or two, when I arrived in New York from England, but (as related elsewhere) Mr. Noice did not so transfer the documents.

Since we are entering here on a subject that involves unpleasantly both the living and the dead, we will point out that Mr. Noice has forced us to it by publishing various charges in such a way that they were printed in the newspapers of nearly every country. We have not replied in the Press; silence is, therefore, impossible in a book which must expect as its readers chiefly persons who have seen and remembered the Press allegations.

We depart here slightly from the chronological arrangement to say that a few days later in New York Mr. Noice told several people variants conflicting with the story he had told Mr. Taylor. These have been reported to me both verbally and in writing by some of those to whom he told them. Among other differences, the New York statements gave

another explanation of the motive for removing parts of the diary. Mr. Noice now said that there were in the diary things which, if published, would enable me (Stefansson) to shift from myself much of the blame which I was carrying in the public mind for what had happened at Wrangel Island, transferring it to Knight and his companions. He believed that I would so use the diary if I got possession of it. To prevent that, he would, therefore, remove and destroy all those pages which would give me any power to shift blame from myself to others. Another difference in the New York story was that, while he had told Taylor that the advances on Wrangel Island had been made by the men and rejected by Ada Blackjack, he now said that they had been made by her and rejected by them.

[The preceding paragraphs have been retained in the text even after we have received Mr. Noice's signed retraction, because it is necessary the reader shall know what reasons Mr. Noice gave out at the time for his having torn out certain parts of the diary and erased others.

If the reader turns to Appendix V and reads the complete transcript of all we have been able to recover of the pages and paragraphs torn out or destroyed by Mr. Noice, he will see more than one argument why they should not have been printed. I have weighed these arguments to the best of my ability, and have sought advice from many persons. We have decided to print what we possess without omission for the following reasons: (1) The notes were specifically left me by Lorne Knight to use as what he considered necessary protection for the good name of himself and his companions. (2) If we omitted anything of what Mr. Noice tore out the reader could not judge for himself on the same basis as we do the validity of the reasons given by Mr. Noice for having permanently destroyed certain parts of the diary and temporarily suppressed others. Finally (3) it might create an unfavourable impression if we omitted anything of consequence from the diary upon which our narrative depends — a book that purports to be frank would not then be frank. The portions of Lorne Knight's diary that were torn out by Mr.

Noice and eventually returned to us, are therefore printed as Appendix V to this book.]

On the day following my arrival from England I had a discussion with Mr. Noice. I did not see him again until a year later when he came to offer retraction of parts of his published story of the tragedy, for he had avoided seeing me in the meantime, and we had been able to deal with him only through intermediaries. Our one interview can be summarized briefly.

I asked Mr. Noice for a statement and questioned him only enough to induce him to continue until the statement was reasonably complete. On his way towards Wrangel he had taken a passenger steamer from Seattle with his shoulder in considerable pain, for he was still wearing a cast.¹ He did not remember ever having expressed any eagerness to go to Wrangel Island, and felt that he had been doing me a great favour in going at all. When he got to Nome he found the Americans there unfriendly to me because they thought I was trying to get an American island (Wrangel) away from the Americans and secure it for the British. He had tried to explain there that my idea had been to continue British possession to forestall Japanese occupation or Russian, and with no thought that the United States wanted the island. The people at Nome had taken little stock in this explanation, and had continued unfriendly. This he found had a tendency to increase the prices of various things he had to buy at Nome. He had felt that the lives of the men in Wrangel Island were in danger, and thought he had been justified, therefore, in not standing out at the raised prices. This was necessary in order that he be able to outfit rapidly, and justified because the lives in Wrangel Island were in danger. He also said that he had believed that it was British Government money he was spending, and that he might have been more frugal if he had realized it was my money, or money I had borrowed and would have to repay. (I had sent

¹ One of the things deleted from this chapter is a long account of this operation, and its effect on the mental condition of Mr. Noice — which result he now himself states — see Chapter 10.

him no information as to where the money came from.)

A final analysis shows that much of the increase in cost of the expedition from the Lomen figures to the eventual total was due to an increase in outfit on the basis of Mr. Noice's quite legitimate interpretation of my cables to him. Lomen Brothers feel that Mr. Noice rather overestimates the effect on costs of various causes believed in by him. They think that some figures which he considered too high, but which he felt he had to pay, were really normal prices.

I gathered both from Mr. Noice himself at this interview and from other evidence later that he handled in an efficient and commendable way the outfitting of the *Donaldson* and the voyage from Alaska to Wrangel Island.

Mr. Noice told me that on his way back from Wrangel he had read over all the papers he had recovered, and that he had questioned Ada Blackjack carefully to bring out obscure details. His view was that the documents and her information showed extreme incompetence and lack of judgment on the part of the entire party on the island. He thought that I was almost equally culpable in not having been able to foresee that these men would be incompetent. When I reminded him that, through long association in the Arctic with Knight, I had never found him incompetent, and that, both through personal knowledge and the report of his shipmates of the *Karluk*, I knew Maurer to be an exceptionally good man, his rebuttal was to the effect that whoever thought well of them before must have been mistaken, as was easily seen by their mismanagement on Wrangel Island. Needless to say, this argument from Mr. Noice did not convince me. Mr. Noice's next point was that, in view of the incompetence which he alleged, the outfit with which the party landed had been inadequate. He thought that with either himself in command or with me in command the outfit would have been ample, so that this point resolved itself again into the mere contention that the Wrangel Island party had been lacking in judgment or skill. When I reminded him that he and Knight had been shipmates on my expedition and that a vote of their comrades would certainly rank Knight's ability

as high as his, he met the issue only by doubting that such would be the result of a vote.

In portions of this interview Mr. Noice seemed to be in a mood of exaltation. He asserted firmly and repeatedly that neither money nor influence nor any consideration of the feelings of others would induce him to swerve one iota from the truth. He would tell the exact facts no matter who got hurt. I reminded him that he was not sure of the exact facts and that he had better temper his righteousness with mercy, at least towards the relatives of the dead. But this did not seem to impress him at the time.

Mr. Noice said that he had already written for the Press more than half of the story which he was basing on the diaries. He thought some of the instalments had already been sent out and had perhaps gone to press, but he was willing to let me read over for minor corrections the ones that had not been sent out, adding that he would review my emendations before they went to the printer. I declined, feeling that, since I did not have a chance to study the documents and write an account which I knew was truthful, I had better not have any responsibility for any of it.¹

Mr. John R. Bone removed editorially some of the most painful errors from Mr. Noice's articles as published by the *Toronto Star*. He did not know at the time that they were errors, and removed them on the mere ground of the pain they would cause. These emendations were telegraphed to many other papers which had not yet published those in-

¹ In the part of the book removed after our acceptance of Mr. Noice's retraction (printed as Chapter 10) we deleted a full discussion of how Mr. Noice for several months prevented both the relatives and me from seeing the diary of Lorne Knight and certain other of the most important papers. We also discussed and analysed the motives he then gave for this line of conduct; that discussion and analysis are now replaced by his own signed explanation to the effect that he was on the verge of a nervous collapse, and would not have done what he did had his mind been functioning normally. His present contention that he published his Wrangel story while his judgment was temporarily far from normal is, I feel, best substantiated by the consideration that the whole tendency of what he did was to injure himself even more than it

stalments and were generally followed by them. For this both the relatives and myself are deeply grateful to Mr. Bone.

The interview with Mr. Noice left me baffled. I could not understand the motives for his course of action which, while it gave me added anxiety at a time when troubles were thick, could not fail in the long run to hurt him more than it did anyone else. I felt sure the story he was writing would convey a wrong impression, and I knew how difficult it would be to correct such an impression later. I foresaw that he was going to injure considerably the cause for which I was still working, and for which my comrades had died, but I was unable to think of a way to prevent it, since our lawyers told us that technically it was our company and not Mr. Noice personally that had sold the story to the newspapers, for on the face of the evidence he had been able to show, the Press were legally justified in considering Mr. Noice to have been our agent.

I found the newspapers that were handling Mr. Noice's material very regretful of the complications. But, since the story was already in publication, there seemed to be nothing to do except go ahead, especially as they were inclined to think Mr. Noice's version correct, because he had the documents and was for the time successfully keeping us from seeing them — a quarrel into which the newspapers did not enter. From my point of view it was too late to make the Press story really correct, and I would trust to a book for a final statement; and perhaps to an eventual verbatim pub-

could injure either the memories of the dead or the cause for which they were working. Their memories will not suffer permanently, though they have been put in temporary eclipse; the cause they died for has suffered, for the Governments of Great Britain and Canada were undoubtedly influenced unfavourably by the public feeling of disapproval of the expedition created or accentuated by Mr. Noice's newspaper story. Another point to bear out what Mr. Noice now says (in his signed apology) about his temporary mental condition is, as stated elsewhere, that he actually seemed to be sincere at the time in the view he expressed that he had a 'discovery right' to Lorne Knight's diary which was one of the reasons which made it morally proper for him not only to sell a story based on that diary but also to tear out and destroy parts of it.

lication of every expedition document to give historians a chance to form a correct impression if they cared to go into the matter. I might say here that what we are actually doing is to furnish several libraries with photostat copies of every document of the expedition, including the correspondence of the boys with their families and with me, both while the expedition was being planned and during its progress. A study of these documents will serve anyone who cares to form an independent judgment of the facts.

The story of Wrangel Island as published by the papers over the signature of Mr. Noice proved sensational in general and incorrect in several particulars, as anyone familiar with arctic conditions was bound to suspect from the beginning and as we now know from an examination of the documents. That appears in other chapters of this book. What we must note here is that the first public contradiction of the original story came from Mr. Noice himself.¹ This contradiction coincided in time with his eventual surrender to us of certain documents. When I returned from England it happened fortunately that most of the expedition papers were in the hands of a New York news organization. After some delay caused by legal formalities, these were turned over to our company – but not until after Mr. Noice's version of the story had been published.

When we received the documents we tried first to ascertain to what extent they had been mutilated. With the loose papers this was impossible, for there was no page numbering.

¹ This refers to a later section of this chapter about Mr. Noice's contradictory stories concerning Ada Blackjack. Mr. Noice has told us he now desires to withdraw the most serious part of these charges. But we cannot remove the discussion wholly from this book since the parts of the charges which he leaves standing would be without motive were she not also guilty of the charges he now wishes to withdraw. By thus leaving his present charges inexplicable when divorced from his former accusation, he practically leaves Ada Blackjack's position unaltered in the minds of those who believe him at all. We have, however, shortened the discussion greatly, and have omitted certain explanations that are less charitable to Mr. Noice than the one he gives in his signed apology – that he was on the verge of a nervous collapse.

But Lorne Knight's diary proved to be in two notebooks that had been originally made with numbered pages. We found that from Volume I there were missing pp. 9-14, 19-22, 27-40, 45-46, inclusive. From Volume II were missing pp. 33-42, inclusive. There had also been torn out a portion of one page and here and there paragraphs had been carefully erased and then the place of the erasure heavily blackened with a soft lead pencil so that these gaps were undecipherable.¹

After three months more all of these pages but ten were recovered, through the friendly offices of Mr. Carl Lomen.

On February 4th, 1924, Mr. J. I. Knight received from Mr. Noice through the mail at McMinnville, Oregon, pages 9-14, 19-22, 27-40, 45-46, and the portion torn from page 41, all from Volume I, and some other papers. At the same time Mr. A. J. T. Taylor received through the mail in Toronto some stray papers and what purported to be the entire diary and notes given to Mr. Noice by Ada Blackjack at Wrangel Island and Nome. There were now missing, so far as we knew, only pages 33-42 from Volume II of Knight's diary.

For the time being we could not understand why ten pages of Volume II had not been returned with the others. But this received at least a tentative explanation from Mr. Noice when he published in the New York *World* and other papers both in America and Europe the statement which I have referred to above as the first contradiction of the original Harold Noice story of Wrangel Island. We take it verbatim from the New York *World* for February 11th, 1924.²

¹ At the time he signed his retraction we asked Mr. Noice if he had kept any memorandum of these passages when he erased them. He replied that he had not. They are, therefore, for ever lost from the records. The way in which portions were erased is illustrated by the photograph printed opposite p. 26 of the Introduction to this book.

² Some of the minor errors are pointed out by footnotes, but the rebuttal follows the quotation.

THE ADVENTURE OF WRANGEL ISLAND
SPURNED ESKIMO WOMAN IS BLAMED FOR
ARCTIC DEATH

WRANGEL ISLAND EXPLORERS REFUSED PROPOSAL OF
MARRIAGE, RESCUER NOICE DISCLOSES HERE

WHEN THREE LEFT CAMP, KNIGHT DIED OF HUNGER

*Though Man's Body was Wasted by Starvation, Ada Blackjack
was Healthy*

Out of the Arctic last summer came a romantic story of three white men presumably lost on a dash across one hundred miles of ice from Wrangel Island to Siberia, of a fourth man who died on the island, and of an heroic Eskimo woman, Ada Blackjack, fifth member of the brave little party, who was rescued after two years on the island by a relief expedition headed by Harold Noice, adventurer and Arctic explorer.

Yesterday, in a cosy room at the Villa Richard, Fort Lee, New Jersey, Mr. Noice told a group of friends a far different story. Ada Blackjack, he said, was not the heroine he at first believed her to be. Instead, he explained, she played a mean rôle in a grim tragedy she could have averted.

Earlier stories, in which Mr. Noice himself paid tribute to the woman's courage and faithfulness, were based largely on statements made by her and on parts of a crude diary she kept. Some entries in this record, at first thought to be unreadable, have recently been deciphered by Mr. Noice and his wife. These, the explorer said, revealed that Ada refused to aid E. Lorne Knight, actual leader of the party, as he lay dying on the island, and that she probably saved her own life on food that would have saved Knight from starvation.

Went to Claim Island

Knight, Allan Crawford, of Canada, and Milton Galle and Frederick Maurer, Americans, went to the island off the north Siberian coast in the spring of 1921, partly to claim it for Great Britain for possible use as a station on future transpolar air flights, and partly to test the theory of Vilhjal-

mur Stefansson that men could live off game in the Arctic without elaborate supplies of equipment.

Since the chief need was warm clothing, they took with them Ada Blackjack, who was to be seamstress and cook. But Mrs. Blackjack, whose husband, a great Eskimo hunter, had died, soon revealed she had other ideas. She quickly proposed marriage to Crawford, Mr. Noice said, and, when repulsed by him, remarked that she had left Nome determined to marry one of the four white men. Since young Crawford was not willing, any of the others would do.

None could see Mrs. Blackjack as a mate, however, and from that time her co-operation lessened. She often refused to work, Mr. Noice said, and gave the little group no end of trouble. Eventually, however, the diaries of all in the party¹ spoke less and less of the woman, and it was presumed she was satisfied.

At first there was much game, particularly polar bears, but the second winter brought real hardship. The bears failed to appear, food grew more and more scarce. Knight was stricken with scurvy. Despite his illness, however, he and Crawford started a dash toward Siberia, only to be halted and driven back by bitter weather.

A short time later, knowing all would perish without outside aid,² Crawford, Galle and Maurer made another attempt to reach Siberia. They never were heard from and have almost certainly perished.

She Refused to Get Food

Knight lay in his tent, almost wholly dependent on the Eskimo woman for his food. He appeared for a while to

¹ This language seems to indicate that Mr. Noice found on Wrangel the diaries of Crawford, Galle and Maurer, as well as that of Knight. If so, he must have them still, for he has acknowledged to the relatives only the diaries of Knight and some fragmentary notes by Galle.

² This statement is either wrong or merely ambiguous. Knight's diary shows that the idea of securing outside aid to bring to the island was not the reason for the journey on which the men were lost. Mr. Noice now acknowledges this — see his statement in Chapter 10, especially the paragraph beginning, 'As published, my newspaper stories gave the impression,' etc.

improve, Mr. Noice said, for an entry in his diary tells of the woman remarking 'the red was coming back to his cheeks.' But other entries told of ~~the~~ woman refusing to visit the traps, which were set near the tent, of washing her hair and making beads ¹ for herself when Knight asked her to search for game.

Her own diary told of Knight asking her to visit the traps. 'I said notting,' she wrote, 'because I had notting to say.' Knight's diary ceased March 21st, 1923, the last entry being in a firm hand and with no suggestion of death. Beyond this place, however, several pages were torn from the book. The woman had started her diary about two weeks before Knight's stopped.

Later information also reveals that the woman knew how to handle a rifle and was a good hunter, Mr. Noice said, although she had claimed she could not shoot.

When the Noice expedition reached Wrangel Island late last summer, Knight's emaciated body, weighing only ninety pounds, was found in his tent. Mrs. Blackjack was well and fat. The party's original food supply had not run out. There were twelve pounds of hard-tack, tea and blubber.

Mr. Noice said he intended to bring his disclosures to the attention of the Explorers Club and to start some kind of inquiry which would establish the facts officially. He was uncertain how this could be done, in view of the doubtful status of Wrangel Island in international law. Mrs. Blackjack, according to his information, is in Seattle. [*End of quotation from 'World.'*]

We would have liked to omit both the publication and discussion of this newspaper accusation against one whom Mr. Noice now says he believes innocent of the main charge — that of not trying in good faith to prevent the death of Lorne

¹ This statement is not found in the portions of Knight's diary, which were returned by Mr. Noice in legible form to the relatives. If correct, it must be based on one of the paragraphs erased by Mr. Noice, or on some other evidence not as yet generally available.

Knight.¹ We are regretfully unable to do that for two reasons: (1) A person who has been unjustly accused deserves an exoneration as public if possible as the original charge; (2) Mr. Noice still asserts there were ten pages missing from Knight's diary when he received it from Ada Blackjack. Since Ada Blackjack was the only person on the island before Mr. Noice arrived, this means practically that he still charges her with having removed the pages.² When we agreed with Mr. Noice and his solicitor that in exchange for the offered retraction and apology we would omit from this book certain harsh evidence, allowing Mr. Noice's own explanation of nervous breakdown to take the place of more severe conclusions the reader might have come to for himself, we explicitly said we would not refrain from stating in the book anything we deemed necessary in order to re-establish the credit of the Wrangel party undermined by Mr. Noice's publications, and we made it clear we reserved the right to demolish by evidence any point which Mr. Noice still sticks to, if we supposed ourselves to possess that evidence. He admits having torn out the twenty-six pages which he later restored and he admits having erased other passages

¹ When the American edition appeared, Mr. Noice was interviewed by two representatives of the *New York Evening Post*. He then voluntarily signed and gave them the following statement:

April 18th, 1925.

I stand back of the main contention of the original articles published by the North American Newspaper Alliance. I retract the story about Ada Blackjack given the N.Y. *Morning World* at the Villa Richard, which was unfortunately given out during a nervous breakdown.

(Signed) HAROLD NOICE

Witnessed by

(Signed) BRUCE GOULD

It will be noted that the retraction of April 18th, 1925, in effect retracts most or all of the retraction of October 19th, 1924 (printed in Chapter 10, *ante*).

² It is, of course, thinkable that Lorne Knight himself removed these pages, but Ada Blackjack denied that when interviewed in Los Angeles by newspaper men and others after the publication of Mr. Noice's charges against her, saying that no pages had been torn from the diary by anyone up to the time Mr. Noice got full possession of it. This puts the published statements of Harold Noice and Ada Blackjack in direct contradiction.

(without keeping a memorandum of them), but he denies having torn out or ever having seen the ten pages now missing. We must therefore present the evidence on this point, especially as anyone who supposes Ada Blackjack to have destroyed written records will also be likely to imagine she did so because they contained – as Mr. Noice implied originally in the newspapers – evidence of her serious guilt.

It is the world-wide publication of the above-quoted newspaper statement which reluctantly decided us to go fully into every detail of the history of the Wrangel Island documents in this book. Anyone who compares with the diary and records, as we now have them, either the original story published by Mr. Noice through the newspapers or this second contradictory story, will see that both disagree with the records no less than each of his versions disagrees with his other version. That will also become sufficiently clear to the reader who follows through the rest of this book. Here we will consider only one point that bears on the history of the manuscripts. We quote first a paragraph from the above newspaper statement: 'Knight's diary ceased March 21st, 1923, the last entry being in a firm hand and with no suggestion of death. Beyond this place, however, several pages were torn from the book. The woman had started her diary about two weeks before Knight's stopped.'

With regard to this we want to establish first, that Mr. Noice was not misquoted by the reporter, for that sometimes happens. That this was not the case is shown by the fact that Mr. Noice himself extracted this clipping from the *New York World* and mailed it to Mr. J. I. Knight with the following letter:

MY DEAR MR. KNIGHT, –

I thought you might be interested in the enclosed clipping which shows that I have a different view-point of the Wrangel Island story, as that first published I obtained from the Eskimo woman.

It is thru Mrs. Noice's efforts that the second story was brought to light, and it is thru her desire to give the boys a

square deal, which she felt I had not done, that these discoveries were made. It caused her much suffering until these facts were made known.

In this new light I see what an heroic character your son was.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) HAROLD NOICE

Having established that Mr. Noice was not misquoted by the *World*, we emphasize next that he clearly intimates that it was Ada Blackjack who removed and either destroyed or now possesses the ten pages of Lorne Knight's diary that are still missing. In that connection we have carefully questioned over again the people to whom Mr. Noice had earlier told his three varying stories about the diary.¹ Mr. Carl Lomen is reasonably certain that when he examined Lorne Knight's diary as shown him by Mr. Noice in Nome, there had been no pages removed by anyone. This was later than any possible access that Ada Blackjack had to this diary. But while only reasonably certain that no pages were missing, Mr. Lomen is quite certain that Mr. Noice told him nothing about any pages being missing and that it was properly to be inferred from Mr. Noice's conversation that no pages were missing. In Toronto Mr. A. J. T. Taylor is certain about the story Mr. Noice told him. At that time Mr. Noice said that he had removed certain pages, segregating them in an envelope. The understanding then was that the pages so abstracted would be turned over by Mr. Noice to me. Again, the witness is quite definite that Mr. Noice neither said nor implied that anything had been torn out by anyone but himself. The New York witnesses to whom Mr. Noice said that he had removed certain pages are clear that he said that he had removed them himself and that he did not intimate that anyone else had removed any pages.

At the time of the publication of Mr. Noice's charges against her, Ada Blackjack was on the Pacific Coast. On being questioned both by newspapermen and friends she

¹ This refers in part to material removed from this book as not needed, after we received his signed retraction.

repeated what she had told us before – that she carefully preserved Knight's diary exactly as he left it when he died, and that the pages now missing were not missing when she gave it to Mr. Noice.

Just before going to press we have been able to reach Ada Blackjack and have a letter from her dated from Seattle, January 25th, 1925. So far as it concerns our inquiry as to whether she thought it possible that Lorne Knight might have torn out of his diary the ten pages now missing, her letter is as follows: 'I will tell you I'm sure that Mr. Knight did not torn the leafs off his diary. Well, I don't know what the people are doing against me anyway. I'm just telling all I know and all I seed and I cannot do more than that.'

It is to be clearly understood that we print these things not in accusation of Mr. Noice but only to defend Ada Blackjack from the charges he has made against her.

Whoever it was removed the pages, it does not seem likely they ever contained any such damaging evidence against her as Mr. Noice seems to imply in the *World* interview. Indeed, as we understand it, Mr. Noice now no longer imputes to Ada the motive he formerly did, though he still implies she removed the pages – at least he has made no other suggestion as to how they were abstracted.

Before the news publication of the deplorable statement of February 11th, 1924 (as quoted above), the families of the Wrangel party had had time and opportunity to make up their minds about the manner and causes of the tragedy. The relatives of the two veterans, Knight and Maurer, were familiar with our plans and methods from the beginning. They and the other families had seen the available records. All that was not missing or mutilated of Lorne Knight's two-year diary had been sent to his parents and typed copies to the other families. Each family had the letters received from their dead, and copies of most or all of these had been exchanged between the various recipients. Ada Blackjack had visited Mr. and Mrs. Knight at McMinnville, Oregon, for a week, and had given them her story of the island life from the landing in 1921 to the death of their son in 1923. In common

with nearly every one who has seen Ada Blackjack in Seattle, San Francisco, or Los Angeles, they formed a very high opinion of her. Her gentle diffidence, soft voice, and obvious sincerity have won particularly extravagant praise from those who do not realize that these are rather common qualities among Eskimos. But be the qualities personal or racial, they are equally convincing, and whoever talks with Ada Blackjack believes her. Mr. and Mrs. Knight had all the more reason to believe, since her story coincided in all essentials with their son's diary. Their sorrows had begun to soften with time, they were in a measure reconciled, they took pride in the heroic and simple story of their son's illness and death as told in his handwriting and by the lips of the gentle woman who had done her best for him to the end. They realized that had she been wiser and more experienced she could have done more, but superstition and lack of skill are but human weaknesses. They loved her for what she is, such as she is, and for what she had endured and tried to do.

During and after Ada Blackjack's visit Mr. Knight wrote at length to the other relatives and to me, sharing with us the information he secured and the opinions he formed. He had already laboured hard to mitigate the grief of the others by imparting to them through letters the better understanding of the situation which he had gained from his explorer son while he was at home during the two years between his first and last expeditions.

In spite of the shock and pain caused by the new statement of Mr. Noice there could be no substantial change of opinion among the relatives or among those well informed. True, we were not as yet completely informed; ten pages were still missing from Lorne Knight's diary. Conceivably there might be some information in them that would materially alter one thing or another, but hardly the fundamental reasons for the tragedy. There were also the erased paragraphs which no one but Mr. Noice had seen. If he had no memoranda of what these had contained before they were erased, he at least might have a memory of them.

Mr. Knight nevertheless felt that some public denial should

be made immediately. He had previously suggested I ought to make Press statements in rebuttal of those being made by Mr. Noice; and different members of the families of Fred Maurer and Milton Galle were also of the opinion that we had been dealing too leniently with Mr. Noice. My idea had been, however, that search warrants or drastic legal action might result in the hasty destruction of documents, and that moral pressure applied over a long time would probably finally result in the surrender of nearly or quite everything. I accordingly still maintained the attitude of discouraging newspaper discussion when Mr. Knight, the father of the man whose death was involved, sent me for approval a lengthy statement which he wanted to give to the Associated Press or to some magazine. We are printing here the portions of it which relate immediately to Mr. Noice's charges of February 11th.

Mr. Knight's Statement

During the six months when Ada Blackjack was the sole companion of our son Lorne until his death, there is nothing in his diary to indicate that she did not do what she humanly could for him and for herself. Lorne speaks in the diary of the fact that he does not want her to take his rifle because she knows nothing of how to use it. She bears this statement out in our personal conversation with her. Lorne tells in his diary of her efforts to get food and her failure, and it is apparent that it was largely because of her inexperience.

The mere human instinct in her would prompt her to exert her every effort to save the life of her only human companion. The thought of being left alone for an indefinite period would certainly have restrained her had she had any tendencies to neglect Lorne as has been suggested by Mr. Noice.

I have seen and talked with Ada, have discussed this matter with her, and I am fully convinced that she was grossly maligned when, 'In a cosy room at the Villa Richard, Fort Lee, New Jersey, Mr. Noice told a group of friends a far different story.' He says that Ada refused to aid Lorne, and

that she could have saved his life if she had tried, and that is why I am writing this article. We have had Ada as a guest in our own house, and she has been admired and lauded by our friends and the friends of Lorne. I cannot allow the stigma to be placed upon myself and my family of having entertained a person so gross and monstrous as Noice would have her appear now.

Noice has contradicted himself when he says now that he found Lorne's emaciated body and that 'Mrs. Blackjack was well and fat.' In his earlier articles he described Ada when he found her, as a frail little creature weighing less than one hundred pounds and in a condition bordering on collapse. She tells us herself that she weighed only ninety pounds when she reached Nome, and her normal weight is one hundred and twenty pounds. To a person weighing normally only one hundred and twenty, the loss of thirty pounds means a condition far short of normal. It is a loss of twenty-five per cent.

Noice says that, 'These (meaning the parts of her diary which Noice claims to have later deciphered) revealed that Ada refused to aid E. Lorne Knight of McMinnville, Oregon, actual leader of the party as he lay dying on the island, and that she probably saved her own life with food that would have saved Knight from starvation.'

In Noice's early report of this tragedy, he stated that Ada was down to her last case of sea biscuit, some tea and saccharine. Lorne's diary, all the way through the early stages of the sickness which resulted in his death, tells of the lack of an antiscorbutic which was necessary for the cure or the curbing of the scurvy. He tells of the need he realizes of red meat such as the polar bear contains, or the caribou, or the walrus, and Noice himself knows the utter lack of good sense or of truth when he asserts that Ada had this sort of food and refused to give it to Lorne.

I still maintain that Ada Blackjack was a real heroine, and that there is nothing to justify me in the faintest belief that she did not do for Lorne all that she was able to do.

I am writing this article because I feel that I owe it to the

public and to a poor Eskimo woman who is being wronged and is helpless to defend herself.

End of Statement by Mr. Knight

We are not reprinting in this book Mr. Noice's Press story of Wrangel Island for two reasons: it is too long, and there is some legal question as to the ownership of the copyright. A description and summary of it will have to do.

Anyone who takes the trouble may read the Press story as signed by Mr. Noice (he now says that some of it was written by others and did not meet his approval fully even at the time) in the London *Daily News*, Manchester *Guardian*, New York *World*, Toronto *Star*, and in scores of other papers both in the Old and New World. He will find it edited and condensed more or less and differing therefore according to the varying styles of the papers that printed it. In general it is very sensational, emphasizing the most gruesome details and, therefore, very painful to the relatives and friends of the dead. The general incorrectness of the impression given can be seen by a comparison of it with the whole of the evidence upon which it is alleged to be based (which we present in this book); it can also be inferred from a reading of Mr. Noice's explanation and apology in Chapter 10.

Since the full Press story cannot be reproduced here, the reader of this volume cannot form an independent general judgment (as we have said) without reference to newspaper files in a library. In doing so he should look for papers printed between October and December, 1923.

Samples at least of the specific misstatements, wrong inferences, and unkindnesses of the account in the Press can be and must be set down here. Otherwise those who missed the Press stories would have no idea of the reasons why we cannot pass over in silence even those charges which Mr. Noice admits (in his signed statement in Chapter 10) were written when his mind was not functioning normally.

When Harold Noice found himself in possession of all the extant records of the four men who died, and when he undertook to withhold these from their friends and relatives until he

had published a narrative which he alleged was based on the records, he placed himself in a position which (wholly apart from the legal aspect) was one of grave moral responsibility. As to good intentions, integrity and ability, the reputations of the dead had no defence except in the honesty and discretion of Mr. Noice. Under those circumstances he did and said the following things, among others:

Mr. Noice erased certain paragraphs of Knight's diary (the only diary) so thoroughly that all but one of the erasures have so far remained undeciphered. He then said to several people in Nome, Toronto, New York and doubtless elsewhere that he had erased these paragraphs because they contained evidence disgraceful to Knight himself and to the other men. These statements have circulated widely, and those who have heard them have imagined all sorts of things, each according to his bent. But on the assumption that the paragraphs which Mr. Noice erased were in tenor similar to the ones he tore out and has since been induced to return, we now know with fair certainty that the erased paragraphs originally showed only what might be called a 'Mid-Victorian' or perhaps a 'puritanical' attitude of the four men towards the one woman in their carefulness to avoid alike improprieties and the appearance of any. The reader will find this inference clear from our full quotation of the restored fragments of Knight's diary in Appendix V. He must then figure out for himself what motives Mr. Noice had for his whole line of conduct — unless he is willing to accept, as we do, the explanation of temporary nervous breakdown which Mr. Noice gives in his signed statement.

Repeatedly speaking of Lorne Knight as his 'trail mate' and 'pal,' Mr. Noice nevertheless gives in the newspaper story constantly the impression that Knight and his companions were incompetent. At times he uses epithets and characterizations directly derogatory, as when he refers to Knight as 'a piece of driftwood,' and says that Knight 'was not mentally equipped to save himself or others.' These would be hard words to use of a dead man, even if they had been as true as they are false — and especially ungenerous words to use while

exploiting and withholding from others that man's only written record. In dealing with such a situation I have to choose between justice to the dead and charity to their living critic who has himself shown the dead no charity. There can be but one decision, though it may hurt not to be able to find an easier way.

But most painful to relatives and friends and most fundamentally misleading is the general impression which Mr. Noice's Press narrative gave that mismanagement and misfortune gradually led to starvation until a last desperate effort had to be made to get succour from Siberia. In his original cable Mr. Noice said that both men and dogs were so weakened with hunger when they started that they 'did not have one chance in a thousand' of reaching Siberia.¹ He further makes the implication clear that the journey to Siberia had been a sudden resolve when food gave out. All this is without support from the documents on which Mr. Noice alleged that he based his narrative, and is in fact contradicted by the diary, which plainly tells that the journey had been planned months before, and that it was planned for purposes entirely other than those alleged by Mr. Noice. Neither is there any evidence that the men or dogs were weak from hunger. These things Mr. Noice himself now clearly realizes and is willing to admit, as will be seen by his signed retraction.

These instances, few out of many, will suffice to show the manner in which the Harold Noice Press story differs from the diary on which it is alleged to be based, and therefore from the facts as we know them and as he either did know or could have known them. They also show in part why the Press story was so very painful to the relatives and intimate friends of the dead.

Here must end our long account of the suppression for five months of some of the Wrangel Island documents,² the still-continued suppression by some one of ten pages (if they have

¹ I was allowed to remove this from the cable by the *Daily News* and Manchester *Guardian*, but it was generally published outside of Great Britain.

² This refers to a section that has now been partly destroyed and partly removed to another part of this appendix.

not been destroyed), and the irreparable mutilation of sentences and paragraphs here and there. The reader will feel, as we do, that the most nearly adequate reasons for what Mr. Noice has done are those which he has himself stated — that when he did these things, so certain eventually to injure himself no less than others, he was on the verge of a nervous breakdown.

FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF THE CHARGE BY
MR. HAROLD NOICE THAT ADA BLACKJACK
WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEATH OF LORNE
KNIGHT

As stated in the *History of the Wrangel Island Documents*, Mr. Noice first wrote and published through newspapers having an aggregate circulation of many millions a romantic story of Ada Blackjack as 'the heroine of Wrangel Island.' Then, months later, he published a newspaper attack upon her (quoted in full in Appendix IV) as having played 'a mean rôle in a grim tragedy she could have averted.' This had a circulation almost, if not quite, as large as the original favourable account, and created an unpleasant situation which has to be faced, for the alternative of silence is worse in most respects and bad especially in its injustice to Ada Blackjack who, if not quite the sensational heroine Mr. Noice at first represented, is much farther still from being a vindictive criminal sitting fat and comfortable while a sick man she could have saved died of hunger.

Since people differ so much in their opinions of right and wrong, we originally had some idea of omitting from this book, as not forming any enlightening part of the narrative, certain entries in Lorne Knight's diary which a few readers might consider to reflect seriously upon the character of Ada Blackjack, and which others might think it bad taste for us to print. But after this last newspaper publicity we had no choice. There must be not even this single discretionary omission from a book which is the official account of the Wrangel Island expedition. I felt much better when that decision had been made, for one is never wholly comfortable about a case where any of the truth has to be suppressed, no matter how kind and good the motives of reticence may be. But since we still feel that the unpleasant controversies started by Mr. Noice have been sufficiently (if not too extensively) noticed in the body of the book, we are placing this chapter in the appendix.

There has been put upon us still further compulsion not to attempt shielding Ada Blackjack by our silence from what blame she may suffer in the eyes of those readers of Knight's diary who do not temper their justice with charity. If we did not tell the whole story now we might be accused later of having suppressed it rather through fear than kindness, and might expect a newspaper 'exposure' from the same quarter whence have come the other charges against the ability, judgment and character of the four men and the one woman of Wrangel Island. For on March 29th, 1924, Mr. J. I. Knight received from Mr. Noice a letter and a typed manuscript which seemed to be a copy of a proposed newspaper or magazine article, and was apparently intended to convince Mr. Knight as well as the general public that his son had been the victim of 'a grim tragedy which could have been averted' by Ada Blackjack. The article did not convince Mr. and Mrs. Knight of any such thing, for they had before them the diary of their son, and they had had Ada Blackjack in their home for a week, forming a very high opinion of her. But it did further convince them and all of us who are associated with the Wrangel Island expedition that every pertinent passage in the diary of Lorne Knight must be published that has anything to say about Ada Blackjack. This has become more necessary since we have recently been able to verify the fact that a manuscript substantially the same as that sent to Mr. Knight has actually been submitted by Mr. Noice to certain newspapers for publication. We have not learned that there has been any publication, for the material appeared to at least some of the papers (for instance, the *Toronto Star*) to be of a nature which they did not care to print whether it were true or not. We are fearful, however, that other journals less scrupulous may be found later.

If Mr. Noice, in his printed statements and in his manuscripts sent to Mr. Knight and to the Press, based his charge of the 'grim tragedy that could have been averted' solely upon things which either occurred, or were alleged to have occurred, shortly before the death of Lorne Knight, the matter could be dealt with briefly.

He seeks his motive for the alleged crime, however, in diary entries scattered throughout the two years, but especially in those for October to December, 1921, a year and a half before the tragedy. He evidently wants his readers to infer that here we have the causes for a treasured anger which resulted more than a year later in Ada's refusing 'to aid E. Lorne Knight, actual leader of the party, as he lay dying on the island.'

Fortunately Lorne Knight made a special effort to be explicit in his diary on the subject of Ada Blackjack, and we are, therefore, able to tell the whole story in his own words, except for a few gaps of a line here and a paragraph there in places where the diary has been mutilated by Mr. Noice. We do not know, of course, whether all the paragraphs which Mr. Noice erased dealt with Ada Blackjack, but the context indicates that some of them did.

As a preliminary to Knight's account of what happened, we must review briefly the circumstances of Ada Blackjack's connection with the expedition. When we were making the Wrangel Island plans in Seattle, we had agreed that while Eskimo hunters were not essential for safety and success, Eskimo seamstresses were, and that in order to secure seamstresses you had to take with you entire families. The object, then, would be to get the best possible combination, the man a good hunter, the wife a good seamstress, both healthy and with children the fewer the better. At Nome the party made tentative arrangements with Eskimo families which these families later broke. It had been intended that Ada Blackjack should go along with the families. When they withdrew from their bargains she was induced to go alone on the promise that natives for her company would be picked up on the voyage either somewhere in Alaska or at East Cape, Siberia. When the party later went in to East Cape they had two purposes — to get natives, and to get a large skin hunting boat — umiak. The umiak they did not buy because the price seemed to them exorbitant, and the natives they were unable to secure.

It was under these circumstances that Ada Blackjack found

herself the only woman with four men on Wrangel. Knight's account will show what she said and did on the island that can have a bearing upon Mr. Noice's charges, and will show also the actions and opinions of all of the men. When the story has been carefully examined the reader will have the feeling that the ideas and conduct of the party, instead of being any of the other many things that have been suggested, were in reality those of men having a clear and stern moral code.

The story of the difficulties opens with a rather formal entry in Knight's diary for September 29th, 1921:

'For future reference, perhaps, I am going to make a statement of what happened to-day. About two P.M. Ada Blackjack, our seamstress, went out of the tent as we were all sitting inside. About an hour later Crawford became anxious as to her whereabouts, as she had not returned. Near the tent on a box were found her "Eversharp" pencil and a finger ring. Sticking in a crack in the box was a note written by her to Crawford, telling him to take these two articles. Seeing that she had left camp, Crawford and I immediately followed her tracks toward the hills inland. After an hour of very fast walking we came up to her and she immediately started to scream and act like an insane person. Out of her clothes dropped a bottle which was half full of liniment. She had been drinking it and was quite sick. After some persuasion we got her started home, and she told us the same thing that she had written a few days before and handed to Crawford, viz. that "we intended to kill her." Also that when she had seen us following her she had drunk the liniment, for she was afraid of me (Knight) and had seen me sharpening my knife in the morning; and several more things too long to relate here. The fact is, we have treated her as well as anyone could be treated, and my honest belief is that her mind is not fully developed, for she acts, so it seems to me, like a child of eight or ten years of age. We will watch her and take good care of her. Not knowing what she may do in the future, I am setting down these facts, as is Craw-

ford, and he is keeping the notes to show to Mr. Stefansson. She seems to be brooding, but we cannot find out the reason.'

September 30th: 'Our seamstress kept Crawford awake all last night asking for protection, saying she was afraid of the "other men." Every time she sees one of us sharpening his knife she asks if the knife is to be used to kill her with. We are more of the opinion than ever that she is slightly touched. Too bad we did not know it in Nome. She surely would not be here.'

On October 1st: 'Our seamstress had a spell or two about us killing her, but this evening she seems to be all right. Have tried coaxing but find that firmness is better.' October 2nd: 'The seamstress has had a few spells to-day, saying she will never see Nome again and a good many foolish things. At this moment she is busy sewing. Hope she keeps it up.'

October 3rd: 'The woman has had several crying spells to-day and tells us that she was warned in Nome by a fortune-teller who told her to be careful of fire and knives. We all have a great deal of use for knives, and she, seeing us use them and believing the fiction told her by the fortune-teller, is frightened stiff. A few minutes ago she asked me to get my rifle ready and when she sleeps to kill her. In the next breath she asks us to save her life and not let anyone harm her. This happens half a dozen times a day. . . . We treat her as nice as can be. One minute her spells look like sham and the next minute real.'

On October 4th Knight says that 'The woman has a spell of crying now and then, but is better than the last few days. She is working a little at winter boots.' On October 5th, 'The woman is working some and rather quiet now. Thank Heaven!' On October 7th, 'The woman asked Crawford for a religious book yesterday and I gave her my grandfather's prayer book. We pointed out several passages in the book to her showing that everybody should be kind and work faithfully, and now she *is* kind and faithful and sews continually.'

The most serious difficulties with Ada Blackjack were in late October and in November. On October 20th: Our

seamstress has practically quit work, and will not give us any reason. Crawford, who is the only one of us who has any influence with her, told her to-day that if she did not finish the skin she has been scraping at [softening as a preliminary to sewing] for the last day or two by to-night that she would be put on bread and water. That accelerated her a bit, but at bedtime to-night the skin is not finished.

On October 27th: 'The seamstress is not doing much work, and it is nearly impossible to get her to do as much as she does. She will not talk and tell us the reason, and at the present time it looks as though we would have to make our own clothing. Crawford is doing his best with her, for he seems to have more influence than any of the rest of us. He has a great deal of patience with her. It seems as though a good horsewhip would do more than anything else in the way of persuasion, but I am sure we will not resort to that.'

On October 28th: 'The seamstress this morning refused to work, but after some persuasion by Crawford she finally went to work in a rather sulky manner.'

So far we have been telling the story of the troubles with Ada Blackjack chiefly from the pages originally removed from Knight's diary by Mr. Noice and returned to Mr. J. I. Knight in February after they had been held from us for about five months (Mr. Noice should have given them to me on the day after my landing in New York when I had my first and only interview with him since he returned from Wrangel Island). On November 2nd we come to what must remain a blank in our story, for the entry is on a page that was so mutilated by Mr. Noice that eight lines cannot be read. We are using a photograph of this page as one of our illustrations so that the reader can see for himself as much as we have been able to see. It is, of course, only an inference that the eight lines here erased are part of the story of the troublesome seamstress.

On November 15th, 'Crawford had some trouble with the woman, but I was away at the time, and do not know the details so will leave to Crawford to set down in his diary.' That part of this unpleasant history, and the many more

pleasant and more important things which Crawford recorded, were all lost in the manner we have told in Chapter 12 of this book.

November 16th: 'The seamstress is not doing anything to-day and refuses to say a word.' On November 20th: 'I asked (Ada Blackjack) if she came along with the intention of marrying one of us, and she replied that she had. She went on to say that . . . she was willing to marry any one of us. Rather a gloomy statement for us! This may all sound funny to the reader, but I can assure him or her that it is *not* funny for the four of us to have a foolish female howling and refusing to work and eating all our good grub. Heaven only knows what she is liable to do to herself or to one of us. To be continually watching her gets rather monotonous.'

On November 21st: 'The seamstress was told by me not to leave camp, but to do certain sewing, but just as it was getting dark she came to the trapping camp, tired out. She said that she wanted to see Crawford and Maurer and say hullo. She evidently has hopes yet of "getting a man." We brought her home on the sled.' On November 22nd, the diary says that, 'When Galle arose this morning he found that some time during the night the foolish female had left with a lantern for the other camp [the hunting camp about eight miles away — at this stage Crawford and Maurer were living there while Knight and Galle were at the main camp]. When I got there Crawford and I decided that I would not take her back home on the sled and that he would not allow her in their tent. Crawford and I told her explicitly yesterday not to leave the main camp again, but as she has done so she would either have to walk back or sleep out all night. She came home at seven-thirty P.M. tired out. She surely understands what she is told, for she talks, reads and writes English very well, but she seems to have her mind set on doing the opposite of what she is supposed to do.'

On November 23rd: 'The seamstress refused to patch a pair of boots to-day, so I tied her to the flagpole until she promised to repair them. Kindness failing to accelerate, I am trying something more forceful.'

November 24th: 'Before leaving camp in the morning I told our seamstress to make some skin socks and mittens, and told her to start scraping a deer skin. When I returned from out on the ice I found her gone, where I could not ascertain. I hitched up the dogs and put up a pole with a box nailed to it half-way between this camp and the other camp. I then went to the other camp with some traps and incidentals for them and returned home, bringing a load of wood with me. When I arrived at camp I found Galle home and the seamstress just arrived. She said that she had been out on the ice wandering around following a fox track.¹ That is all I could get out of her. Consequently she went supperless to bed. She will not work, and sits about and disobeys orders and eats up our food and is being paid fifty dollars a month for doing the opposite always. Sometimes I think she is a little touched in the head and other times just plain ornery.'

November 25th: 'On arising found the woman gone again and followed her tracks towards the trapping camp for a short distance. If she does not come home to-night or in the morning I will hitch up the dogs and go to the other camp to see if she is there. It looks as though it will take one man to watch her constantly, for if anything serious happens to her it will be a reflection on Mr. Stefansson and us when we get back to Nome.'

On November 26th, 'Hitched up dogs and went to trapping camp to see if the woman had gone there. Arrived and found that she had not been seen. Crawford decided to return to main camp with me and look for her to-morrow. Galle arrived from the westward as we got home, stating that he had found her tracks going west along the beach. They followed the beach from the camp about four miles and then zigzagged north-west for four or five miles farther where Galle turned back. Where he left the tracks to

¹ This was undoubtedly done in conformity with an Eskimo belief universal in Alaska that certain spirits which live in hollow hills, sometimes walk about in the guise of foxes. There are many tales of Eskimos following fox tracks and waking right into these hills where they are usually very kindly treated. In some of the stories the Eskimo marries one of the hill people.

return they were going north-north-west. As far as we can determine she took no food with her, but we think she took a night-gown and a suit of underwear. All day yesterday the weather was bad, blowing a light gale from the east with drifting snow which continued during the night. Crawford and I will follow the tracks to-morrow with the dog team.'

November 27th: 'Crawford and I hitched up the dogs this morning and followed the tracks Galle had found yesterday. After travelling just an hour west we saw something dark on the harbour to the west, and by the aid of the glasses we saw that it was the lost one. She was walking very slowly toward camp with her usual camp clothing on, over which was a double Siberian native reindeer suit, making her look, from a distance, like an inverted sack of potatoes. Under her outer garments was a suit of underwear and a nightgown. We bundled her on the sled and brought her home where she now sits moping. Crawford tried to ascertain what her object in leaving was and where she had been, but to no avail. She did say, however, that she had taken a few hard bread with her, and she did not seem to be very hungry when she arrived here.'

On November 28th: 'The woman has done practically nothing to-day except wash a few dishes. Crawford asked her this morning if she intended to run away again and she said "Maybe." She wanted to go to the other camp with us as usual, but when we said no, she was as usual disappointed.'

On November 29th: 'All of us have one pair of skin socks apiece, and all have, excepting Galle, a pair of skin mittens apiece. For the last two days the female has absolutely refused to make a pair of mitts for Galle, and to-night she goes to bed supperless. A few minutes ago Galle caught her stealing some hard bread, and I refused to let her eat it. She is certainly a trial to one's patience.'

November 30th: 'Galle went to his traps but got nothing. He returned to camp just a few minutes before I did and found the native woman just leaving camp. She had with her a heavy woollen blouse that she had brought from

Nome. She told Galle that she was going to the mountains. Of course, he told her to remain at camp. She also stated to Galle that she would not go to the other camp again.'

It is to be inferred from the diary that although they were going through the form of keeping Ada Blackjack on short rations, it was form only — she ate what she wanted in the daytime when the men were away and sometimes she got up to eat at night. Most of the time the 'short rations' therefore meant only that she did not have her meals with the others. This is brought out definitely in the entry for December 1st: 'As I was leaving camp this morning the woman had to be forcibly thrown off the sled, although yesterday she stated that she would not go to the other camp again. She still refuses to work, and therefore is going without meals, although Galle and I know that she has all she wants to eat while we are gone.' December 2nd: 'The woman just sits and mopes and still refuses to do anything.' December 3rd: 'The woman is still moping. Will not answer us when we speak to her.' December 4th: 'The female is still moping, and I endeavoured in vain to-day to find the reason.' December 5th: 'Nothing but mopes from the woman.' December 6th: 'No change in the female.' December 7th: 'No change in the "Seamstress."'

The entry for December 11th is incomplete. The bottom portion of the page, consisting of about five lines, was torn out of the diary by Mr. Noice, and was among the other pages which he eventually returned to Mr. Knight. However, the entry for that day did not end with the portion torn off but ran over to the next page, and here Mr. Noice has erased the first line. We quote the entry as we have it, showing the break that comes where the line has been erased. 'We still refuse to give the woman a thing to eat. She continues to steal grub (hard bread, mostly) and refuses to work. I think, however, she is . . .'

In the entry for December 12th Mr. Noice has erased two-thirds of a line, and in that for December 14th he has erased an entire line. These may or may not have concerned the difficulties with Ada Blackjack.

Coming back to the restored pages, we have under date of December 16th: 'When Galle arrived home from his traps he found the woman and her two suit cases ready to depart for the mountains. As I arrived home, some time later, she came back, minus the suit cases, but with a pack on her back of things she had removed from the aforesaid suit cases. She had cached them inland somewhere. Galle found as she was leaving that she had a great amount of dried figs and some hard bread which he let her have. We refused to let her in the house unless she would promise to sew, and as she would not promise she is outside in an old snowhouse I made some time ago. The weather is warm and calm, and no harm can befall her.'

On December 17th, 'The woman was allowed to come in the house this morning and after sitting around in the same old way, I told her that she would have to sleep outside after this if she did not work. A few minutes after she came to me and asked me what she should make. I told her mitts and socks, and she started getting sinew ready for sewing. She worked at that until supper and I told her she could also eat . . .' Here three lines have been erased by Mr. Noice. The entry continues, 'now sewing industriously. Hope it lasts, but think it doubtful.'

But Knight's hope was granted, and hereafter most of the entries are very creditable to Ada Blackjack. On December 18th the diary says, 'The woman has worked industriously all day scraping skins.' December 19th: 'The woman is working industriously, but is very slow. Finished a pair of mittens for Galle to-day.' December 20th: 'The woman is very industrious, and has been very gay all day, especially after I told her that Crawford and Maurer will be down for Xmas.' December 21st: 'The woman is working like a Trojan, and arose this morning at six o'clock to bake bread.' December 22nd: 'The woman is doing wonderfully well. December 23rd: 'The woman is doing wonderfully well, baking, cooking, washing dishes, and sewing.' December 27th: 'The seamstress is doing very well and is cheerful.'

In the entry for January 10th, 1922, we have: 'The woman

is again on a strike, accompanied by a deluge of tears. Why? None of us know.'

In the entry for January 12th four lines have been erased. In that for January 14th two and one-half lines have been erased, but the following was not removed: 'The weather is warm and she will be all right. I am sure she is the most stubborn creature I have ever known.'

On January 17th the diary tells us 'The woman is working fine,' and on January 19th we have this fragment: 'The seamstress complains of a headache and when I gave her some "Aspirin" . . . ', after which three and one-half lines have been erased. Three lines have also been erased from the entry for January 20th.

These erasures by Mr. Noice are the more exasperating and less defensible because Knight made it plain in the entry for September 29th (quoted above) that he was deliberately putting down the very things he wanted all men to know about this difficult situation. Any sympathy with Mr. Noice one might have had on the ground that he was trying to protect the woman, disappears when we remember that it was he who first published some of these things, that he has tried to publish others, and that on the basis of them he has charged Ada Blackjack in the Press with far worse motives and actions than there is just reason to deduce from any evidence we have.

From this time on the troubles with Ada Blackjack seem to have ceased. January 23rd we have: 'The woman is working O.K. to-day.' January 25th: 'Woman doing O.K.'

On February 9th, 'The woman has been working diligently for a long time, and excepting an occasional spell of crying seems to be contented.' February 25th: 'For the last few days the woman has been doing all the cooking, dish-washing and scullery work besides sewing and mending, and doing it very well. She surely is the most inconsistent body I have ever known.'

There is no further mention of Ada Blackjack until May 27th when Knight says: 'I have not said anything much for a long time about the seamstress, but will take the time now

to say that she is doing as well as anyone could wish. Although we did not bring her along for cook and dishwasher she insists upon doing that work and also sews when necessary. She is homesick, and says that she wants to get back to "Home and mother," Nome, and as long as she is as useful as she is now I am sure we will all miss her when she goes next summer (???) (Provided the ship comes). From 'when she goes next summer' followed by question marks it seems most likely the party had previously discussed shipping her out the summer of 1922, if they could, but that her later good conduct had begun to incline them to wanting to have her stay with the expedition another year.

The next reference is June 29th: 'I wish to state here that the seamstress is doing wonderfully well and is cheerful.'

The next we hear of Ada Blackjack is in the entry for November 1st: 'For a long time I have said nothing about our seamstress. She is very quiet and rather downhearted over the fact that the ship did not show up, but she keeps busy and is at present making a pair of fancy moose-hide mittens (probably for Crawford).'

On January 21st, 1923, we have: 'The woman is busy making clothing. It has been decided that Crawford, Maurer and Galle will attempt in a few days to go to Nome via Siberia. I will remain here as camp keeper for the reason that I think I would be unwise to attempt the said trip. See my entry for January 12th. The only objection to this plan as far as I am concerned is that I will be left alone with the native woman. But one of the things about this country is that circumstances sometimes demand actions that would be reprehensible "on the outside." I am sure that anyone looking at this case clearly will see that there is nothing else to be done. . . .'

On January 29th, after the other three men had left for Nome: 'I wonder what people will say about my staying here alone with the female? Crawford and I talked the matter over thoroughly, and although I disliked staying and he disliked my staying here with her, we came to the con-

clusion that it was the best thing to do. Stefansson, I am sure, will agree to that. And with some discretion, I am sure the three men who have just left can soften things down a lot when they get to Nome. The woman does not seem to mind it, and to be perfectly frank, I think she is rather glad of the circumstances, for as I stated long ago, she is most anxious to "get" a white man. *No chance* as far as I'm concerned.'

On February 7th as Knight became weak from the disease from which he later died, he wrote, 'The woman is a great deal more frightened over my condition than I am, and I don't deny that it is a rather mean position in which she finds herself, but she is wonderfully cheerful and is now busy sharpening the wood saw. She insists on doing practically everything, and I willingly permit her, for I am not able to do much.'

Later, when Knight's illness progressed, the entries in the un mutilated parts of the diary express occasional annoyance with Ada Blackjack because she did not tend the traps and hunt as energetically as he thought she should. These are printed in Chapter XIII. It must be remembered that at this time she, too, was ill, and that Knight's own point of view had been already somewhat modified by his disease, for pessimism and irritability are among the recognized symptoms of scurvy.

Those who know the situation thoroughly, must agree with Lorne Knight's father who wrote in reply to Mr. Noice's charge that Ada Blackjack was responsible for, or could have prevented, the death of his son: 'I still maintain that Ada Blackjack was a real heroine and that there is nothing to justify me in the faintest belief that she did not do for Lorne all that she was able to do.'

SUMMARY OF THE HISTORY AND POLITICAL SITUATION OF WRANGEL ISLAND¹

[Reprinted from *The Geographical Journal* of the Royal Geographical Society of London for December, 1923]

THE history of the discovery of Wrangel Island is bound up with ideas of a large continent lying off the north-eastern coasts of Siberia. Rumours of islands in this region were current on the mainland from the seventeenth century. During the first half of the next century, a considerable part of this coast and the group of islands, now known as the Bear Islands, were visited by Russian travellers. It was then thought that America reached as far as to the north of the river Kolma. To ascertain the truth of this, Andreyev, a Cossack, undertook a journey in 1763 from the mouth of the Krestvaya northwards, visiting the Bear Islands. From the last of these he claimed to have seen to the east an extensive country which he took to be an island of considerable size. Six years later, however, a party of Russian surveyors, Leontev, Lisev, and Pushkarev, failed to confirm his reported discovery.

In the opinion of the Russian traveller, Baron Wrangel, Andreyev had probably seen part of the Asiatic mainland. Wrangel himself, while on a journey along the Siberian coast from Nijne-Kolimsk to Kolyuchin Bay in 1824, was told by natives that between Cape Shelagski and Cape North, from some cliffs near the mouth of the river, it was possible on a clear summer's day to see snow-covered

¹ This paper was published by the *Geographical Journal* unsigned, and was therefore written presumably by the editor himself, by some member of his staff, or by an authority on the subject who wrote it at the request of the editor. The paper is reprinted here by special permission of the Secretary of the Royal Geographical Society. It is an important contribution to the subject because of the independent, semi-official position of the Society, who are frequently consulted by the British government as to the scientific or historical soundness of geographical claims. It is also important because it states concisely and forcibly the undebatable essentials of the case.

mountains at a great distance to the north. But in spite of persevering efforts to reach this land (April, 1824) Wrangel was compelled to turn back unsuccessful. In his narrative of an Expedition to the Polar Sea (English edit., 1840, p. 348) he writes: 'With a painful feeling of the impossibility of overcoming the obstacles which nature opposed to us, our last hope vanished of discovering the land which we yet believed to exist. . . . We had done what duty and honour demanded; further attempts would have been absolutely hopeless, and I decided to return.'

The first to sight land in this region was Captain Kellett, R.N., of H.M.S. *Herald*, in command of an expedition in search of Franklin. On August 6th, 1849, he landed upon a small island, subsequently called Herald Island, of which he took possession in the name of Queen Victoria. From this island he saw west and north what he took to be several islands with an extensive land beyond. These were not visited by him: to the most easterly island was given the name Plover Island, and the mainland was afterwards called Kellett Land on the maps. These new discoveries were taken to be part of that polar continent of whose existence off Cape Akan Wrangel had heard, and exaggerated ideas as to its size again became current. In 1855 Commander Rodgers, U.S.N., of the *Vincennes*, landed on Herald Island, but failed to sight Kellett Land. However, in 1867 the American Captain Thomas Long sailed along the southern shores of the 'land' seen by Kellett, to which Long gave the name Wrangel Land. That same year, as the season was an exceptionally open one, the place was also visited by several American whalers, including Captains Thomas and Williams, who established the fact that 'Plover Island' was merely a headland on the coast of Wrangel Land. Thirteen years afterwards, a German, Captain Dallman of Hamburg, claimed to have anticipated Long's discovery of Wrangel Land by a year, but after that lapse of time he was unable to produce his log or any member of his crew to support his claim. Erroneous reports on the extent of the eastern coast gave fresh support to

the false conception of its size and the importance of the discovery.

One of the visitors in 1869, Captain Bliven, for example, expressed his opinion that it not improbably extended several hundred miles to the north. This was to have an unfortunate result. In 1879 Commander De Long, U.S.N., of the *Jeannette*, being on a voyage of exploration, entered the pack near Herald Island, hoping that he would be carried to Wrangel Island, where he might winter. Actually he drifted westwards, but to the north of Wrangel Land, which was thus shown to be a comparatively small island. The *Jeannette* was finally crushed in the pack near Henrietta Island, few of her crew surviving their subsequent hardships. Two years later Captain Hooper, of the *Corwin*, searching for De Long, landed on Wrangel Island, as it is now more generally called, and took possession of it for the United States (August 12th, 1881). The same year Captain R. M. Berry, U.S.N., of the *Rodgers*, made a stay of nineteen days at the island, during which it was explored and mapped, and the idea of an extensive land in this region was finally dispelled.

There seems to be no record of any Russian ship having reached this island until 1911. In the previous year the ice-breakers *Taimuir* and *Vaigach* had been fitted out at Vladivostok for the hydrographic survey of the Arctic Ocean and islands lying off the Siberian coast. No narrative of the first years of this work is accessible, but a summary of the geographical and hydrographical results was compiled in 1912 by Lieut. B. V. Davidov and printed for the Russian Admiralty. This expedition must have erected the tall beacon thirty-five feet high which stands north of the entrance to the lagoon in the sand spit between Blossom Point and Cape Thomas (*Arctic Pilot*, 1920, p. 477). In the summer of 1914 these same ice-breakers tried to reach Wrangel Island again, to rescue the crew of the *Karluk* (see below), but were unable to get within thirty miles of the island, and so far as can be ascertained, no Russians were ever on Wrangel Island before or after the single visit of 1911.

Nevertheless the island seems to be claimed by Russia. At the end of 1916 we were informed by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs that he had received from the Russian Ambassador in London an official notification to the effect that 'the territories and islands situated in the Arctic Ocean and discovered by Captain Vilkitski in 1913-1914 have been incorporated in the Russian Empire.' Attached to Count Benckendorf's note was a memorandum giving a summary of Vilkitski's new discoveries off Cape Chelyuskin, claiming them for the Russian Empire; and the note continued thus:

'Le Gouvernement IMPERIAL profite de cette occasion pour faire ressortir qu'il considère aussi comme faisant partie intégrante de l'Empire des îles Henriette, Jeannette, Bennett, Herald et Oujedinenia, qui forment avec les îles Nouvelle Sibérie, Wrangel et autres situées près la côte asiatique de l'Empire, une extension vers le nord de la plate forme continentale de la Sibérie.

'Le Gouvernement IMPERIAL n'a pas jugé nécessaire de joindre a la présente notification les îles Novaia Zemlia, Kolgouev, Waigatch et autres de moindres dimensions situées près la côte européenne de l'Empire, étant donné que leur appartenance aux territoires de l'Empire se trouve depuis des siècles universellement reconnue.'¹

The curiously oblique reference to Wrangel Island seems designed to imply previous acceptance of what, so far as we can discover, had never before been claimed.

The last stage in the history of the island is connected with the Stefansson Arctic Expedition of 1913-18. Before sailing Stefansson received instructions from the Canadian Government to reaffirm any British rights in Arctic lands at which the expedition might touch. Since Kellett had sighted Wrangel Island in 1849, when he formally took possession of Herald Island, Mr. Stefansson's men regarded the former as coming within his instructions, and British Sovereignty

¹ For translation of this, see footnote p. 49.

was declared (July 1st, 1914) by the section of the *Karluk's* crew which reached the island. After the War, in the belief that some other Power might attempt to establish a prior claim, Mr. Stefansson determined to forestall any such action by despatching another expedition, under the command of Mr. A. Crawford. The party included three other white men, Galle, Maurer and Knight, with an Eskimo woman as cook. They sailed from Nome and landed on the island in September, 1921. The understanding was that they should maintain themselves chiefly by hunting, that therefore only actual supplies for six months should be taken, and that a supply ship would be sent in 1922. Owing to difficulties experienced by Mr. Stefansson in raising funds, the relief ship did not sail until the end of August, 1922, a month after the close of favourable navigation, and failed to reach the island. This year, by the efforts of Mr. Griffith Brewer, a relief party, under the command of Mr. Harold Noice, was able to leave Nome in the *Donaldson* and reach Wrangel Island safely. Before the expedition sailed Mr. Noice was informed by the Soviet authorities at East Cape, Siberia, that unless the ship called at Petropavlovsk for proper clearance papers, and took aboard a detachment of Red Guards, it would be confiscated! On his return Mr. Noice also reported that his attempt at organizing a relief party had been met with hostility in Nome, where the island is regarded as belonging to the United States.¹

When the relief ship arrived at Wrangel Island they discovered that disaster had overtaken the original party. The sole survivor was the Eskimo cook. It appears that, being certain that a ship would arrive in 1922, they did not take full advantage of the hunting season, so that supplies were running short by Christmas. They then determined

¹ This paragraph and the next are less exactly accurate than the paper is in general, for it depends in part on the confused press accounts at the time of the tragedy. Mr. Carl Lomen, who was in Nome at the time, says, for instance, that it was unfair of Mr. Noice to allege that 'his attempt at organizing a relief party was met with hostility in Nome.'

to attempt to reach the Siberian coast, where provisions could be obtained. Unfortunately Knight, the most experienced ice traveller, was suffering from scurvy, and was left on the island with the Eskimo. The exact fate of the party is unknown; in Mr. Stefansson's words, 'it seems likely that one afternoon the party travelled too far into the gathering twilight, walked on unsafe ice, and broke through.' Knight died on June 22nd, 1923. The Eskimo woman managed to support herself until the arrival of the *Donaldson*. Before the ship sailed for Nome a party of thirteen Eskimo, under the command of Mr. Charles Wells, were established on the island with supplies for two years.

The above summary includes all the facts which seem relevant to an attempt to estimate the value of conflicting claims to sovereignty. A Russian heard of it in 1824, but never saw it. An Englishman saw it in 1849 but never landed on it. An American landed on it in 1881 and claimed it for the United States. A Russian ship put up a beacon in 1911. It was quite unoccupied when the men of the *Karluk* took possession in 1914, and since 1921 Mr. Stefansson has had a party in continuous 'effective occupation.' His spirited action is said to be based on a conviction that the island will be useful in the future as an air station on a polar route from Great Britain to the Far East, and if his claim is good he should not, we think, be allowed to fail for want of a little public support in money; for Wrangel Island must be a rather profitless field for private enterprise.

APPENDIX VII

PLOVER LAND¹

BY VILHJALMUR STEFANSSON

[Reprinted from *The Geographical Review* of the American Geographical Society, New York, Vol XI, No. 2, April 1921]

IN the Arctic, real lands have surpassing skill in hiding themselves, while lands that never existed appear clear and indubitable to the eyes of the keenest and most experienced explorers.

In 1826 Sir John Richardson, then on his first Arctic voyage, sailed close by Clerk Island in Dolphin and Union Straits. On his second voyage in 1848 he tells us that because of unfavourable conditions he passed Clerk Island without seeing it. No one has seen it since. In 1911 I travelled by sled over the site of it. Down to that time Clerk Island appeared on the Canadian Government maps, but it will not appear in future.

Several other Arctic lands, after being reported by men of

¹ It appears in the body of this book and also in the Appendix section on the 'Fragmentary Papers of Milton Galle' that when in September, 1922, Galle first heard Crawford and Knight discussing their plans to make a journey away from Wrangel Island in January, 1923, he put on record that he did not believe this journey would be towards Siberia. From Galle's notes themselves it is not possible to make out where he supposed they were going, but thinking back to the many discussions of Crawford, Knight and Galle when they were with me on my lecture tour in 1922, I feel certain that he imagined they were going in search of 'Plover Land,' or 'Borden Land,' as it was named by John Hadley and William Laird McKinlay when they saw it or thought they saw it from Wrangel Island the spring of 1914. Partly from the intrinsic interest of the subject itself and partly on account of its bearing upon these ideas of Galle and upon the general situation in Wrangel Island from September to December, 1922, we are reprinting here a paper embodying the information furnished by Hadley and McKinlay which was originally published in the *Geographical Review* of the American Geographical Society, Volume XI, No. 2, April, 1921, under the title of 'Plover Land and Borden Land.' In this appendix we are using the title 'Plover Land' because since the paper was written a large island discovered by us in 1915 many hundred miles from Hadley's 'Borden Land' has received the official designation of Borden Island.

authority, have kept their places on the chart for one or several generations but are now gone for ever. Others have been rendered doubtful or have at least been compelled to retreat before the advance of knowledge. In this class are Sannikov Land, the existence of which has been rendered doubtful by the voyage of the *Taimyr* and the *Vaigatch*, and Crocker Land reported by Peary.

It seems to me that Crocker Land should still be granted a period of grace. MacMillan marched into the edge of it (as plotted by Peary) and found only sea ice. Had he taken soundings and found abysmal depths, the case against land being there would be impregnable. But he took no critical soundings, and the soundings taken on our journey aimed towards the same general locality in 1917 grew no deeper as we went away from the known lands but continued to be of a 'continental shelf' character for one hundred and fifty miles as we travelled towards Crocker Land. I suggest that we let Crocker Land bide till the vicinity is sounded and shown to be deep water, or till the region is explored so thoroughly that we know it is not merely hiding.

Some Arctic lands, as has been remarked, have shown striking aptitude in hiding. The strait between Cape Chelyuskin and Nicholas II Land is but sixty miles wide and the land to the north is high, even mountainous, and yet that passage was traversed by Nordenskiöld in 1878 and Nansen in 1893 without either of them suspecting that it was a strait. The discovery remained for Vilkitsky in 1913.

It is only about sixty miles north from Cape Parry to Nelson Head on Banks Island, and Nelson Head is a bold cape with high hills or low mountains just behind it — three thousand or four thousand feet high. I have at various times spent altogether several months at Cape Parry, and nearly every day I climbed the highest hills there (three hundred or four hundred feet) with field-glasses to look northward for bears and seals and incidentally for land. And yet, only two or three times have I seen Nelson Head, but each of those times I saw it clearly, well above the sky line.

In 1853 Leopold McClintock, to me the most capable and admirable of the entire noble line of British naval men who laid the American Arctic bare to our eyes, was at what we now call Cape McClintock at the northern end of Prince Patrick Island and did not see the large land which we discovered sixty-two years afterwards lying only thirty or forty miles to the north-east. Nay more, he says in the record which we found in his cairn at Cape McClintock that he had visited 'the islands and reefs lying to the northward.' I have since examined his manuscript map, sketched into his diary at the time, and this shows that he had seen some small sand bars that are fifteen or twenty miles north-north-east of Cape McClintock or only that much distant from our New Land. I have also stood at Cape McClintock looking north-east without seeing anything but what he saw. I then went to the 'islands and reefs' which he visited and even to those beyond, which he saw only from a distance still without seeing land beyond. And the day was apparently clear. But later, on days of more favourable weather conditions, I have climbed up the hills on our New Land (which is now called Brock Island) and seen Prince Patrick Island and all the intervening islands and sand bars.

Having justified by a few examples our thesis that non-existent lands reveal themselves while real ones lie in hiding, we come to the interesting case of Plover Land.

Kellett's Plover Land

Captain Kellett, who was McClintock's superior officer in 1853 (when McClintock discovered Prince Patrick Island and left there the record quoted above), had three years earlier been in command of the *Herald* on her Beaufort Sea voyage when she discovered Herald Island. After telling about discovering and landing on Herald Island Kellett reports that in about latitude 72° N., longitude 175° W., there is an extensive land upon which he did not set foot. In his account the following is perhaps the most striking passage:

There was a fine clear atmosphere (such a one as can only be seen in this climate), except in the direction of this extended land, where the clouds rose in numerous extended masses, occasionally leaving the very lofty peaks uncapped, where could be distinctly seen columns, pillars, and very broken peaks, characteristic of the higher headlands in this sea — East Cape and Cape Lisburne, for example. As far as man can be certain who has one hundred and thirty pairs of eyes to assist him, and all agreeing, I am certain we have discovered an extensive land.¹

Other Voyages in the Vicinity of Plover Land

Plover Land (named for the companion ship to the *Herald*) was put on the charts. But later Commander Rodgers in the U.S.S. *Vincennes* ran through the position as indicated on the Admiralty chart and anchored in forty-two fathoms in latitude $72^{\circ} 5' N.$, longitude $174^{\circ} 37' W.$, where Plover Land should have been, and reported that for thirty miles in every direction there was no land though the weather was so clear that the horizon was apparently without limit.² A little doubt, however, is cast on this testimony by the fact that on the same voyage Commander Rodgers failed to see Wrangel Island although, according to his reported astronomical observations and our present knowledge, he was only a few miles from it. After all, the position assigned to Plover Land by Kellett was only approximate; there may also conceivably have been an error of position in Rodger's reckoning.

Later the ship *Rodgers*, commanded by Lieutenant Berry,³ reported reaching latitude $73^{\circ} 44' N.$ in longitude $171^{\circ} 48' W.$ without seeing land. If we consult the standard charts we find the whole vicinity of Plover Land sounded.

¹ Papers and Correspondence Relative to the Arctic Expedition under Sir John Franklin, Parliamentary Papers, 1850.

² Rept. of the Secretary of the Navy, December 3rd, 1881, Reconnaissance of Behring's straits, pp. 7-9.

³ Rept. of the Secretary of the Navy, November 28th, 1881, pp. 6-9, 755-963.

But the figures show shallow water, as if the facts were determined so to balance themselves as still to leave a possibility of land. We may also remember that, if it be supposed that Kellett was nearer to the land than he thought, he may have overestimated its extent.¹

We come now to the reason for the writing of this paper. Plover Land has again been seen.

Plover Land and Borden Land

In the spring of 1914, after the wreck of the *Karluk*, a short distance to the north-eastward, several members of our expedition remained encamped at Waring Point, Wrangel Island, for several months. During that time a land other than Herald Island was seen one day to the eastward and was repeatedly seen thereafter. The two most important witnesses are John Hadley and William McKinlay.

The Testimony of Hadley

John Hadley, a native of Canterbury, England, had spent most of his life in the Arctic since he went thither in 1889, as petty officer on the U.S. Revenue Cutter *Thetis* sent to determine whether the station of the American whaling fleet at Herschel Island was in Alaska or Canada. Some of the time he had been aboard whaling ships,² but for the most part he had been engaged in whaling from a shore station either at Point Hope or Point Barrow. I met him in 1908, and from my first meeting my liking and admiration for him increased continually. He was one of the most valuable members of our expedition of 1913-18. For fifteen months in 1913-14 he was with the *Karluk* section of that expedition. I re-engaged him in 1915, making him second officer of the C.G.S. *Polar Bear*, of which he later became captain.

¹ The author of the Royal Geographical Society paper on Wrangel Island, printed as Appendix V, *ante*, concludes that Plover Land was a headland on the present Wrangel Island.

² See 'Whaling off the Alaskan Coast: From the Journal of Jack Hadley of Point Barrow, Alaska,' *Bull. Amer. Geogr. Soc.*, Vol. 47, 1915, pp. 905-921.

In point of years Hadley's Arctic experience has never been equalled by any explorer, so far as I know. He had, for instance, spent there more than twice as many winters as Peary, even before he joined our expedition. These were not inactive years ashore, for every spring he was out with companions both white and Eskimo, fighting the ice and weather in the strenuous sport of catching that biggest of all game animals, the bowhead whale. Theodore Roosevelt once planned to hunt bowhead whales on the northern coast of Alaska. He might have found it braver sport than hunting lions in Africa: he certainly would have found it more healthful than the South American jungle. Hadley had found it healthful. His eye was still keen, and so was his enjoyment of life; his judgment was sound by nature. These considerations lend weight to his story of what he called 'Borden Land.'

It was from higher ground in the vicinity of Waring Point that Hadley first noticed a new land beyond Herald Island. The northern tip of this land was hidden by Herald Island, and it extended about 25° south. His first thought on seeing it was the strangeness of not having seen it before, especially on the march ashore after the wreck of the *Karluk*. When he made a statement to that effect to the Eskimo Karraluk, the Eskimo replied that he had seen the land both from the ice after the *Karluk* was wrecked and while the party were still encamped there and also while they were on their way to Wrangel Island. Hadley inquired from the other men whether they had seen the land, but none of them had noticed it. He did not consider this strange, for he assumed that it would have been covered with snow at the time and perhaps only indistinctly visible, being but a white outline on a white horizon. Had it been distinct, he himself certainly would have noticed it.

After the land first had been seen it was visible whenever weather conditions were suitable. It is a matter of common knowledge that the absence of fog in one's immediate vicinity is no guarantee that there is not a thick fog bank lying invisible a few miles away and hiding everything

beyond. Accordingly it did not strike Hadley as remarkable that on many apparently clear days the land could not be seen.

After the land had been seen three or four times and there was general agreement as to its reality, it was decided to name it 'Borden Land' in honour of Sir Robert Borden who had been chiefly instrumental in securing the transfer of our expedition from American auspices to those of the Canadian government.

Hadley considered the most important fact about the land to be that when it was first seen it was to a large extent covered with snow and that day by day the snow could be seen to be getting less and less, so that when the land was last seen the snow was mainly confined to what appeared to be gullies or the slopes of hills. He said he had no doubt at all of the existence of the land; the fact that it was not seen from the decks of either the *King and Winge* or the United States Revenue Cutter *Bear* when they were cruising in the vicinity of Herald Island looking for the missing members of the expedition, he considered to be of no significance. A fog to the north-east would, in his opinion, have explained its non-appearance.

This, in substance, is what Hadley told me. As he has since died, I will fortify myself by quoting Archdeacon Hudson Stuck's account of his interview with Hadley on this subject. The time of the Archdeacon's visit to our camp was late March, 1918. I quote from pp. 304-5 of his delightfully written book, *A Winter Circuit of Our Arctic Coast*:

Ten miles more brought us to Barter Island and to the extensive building, half underground in sensible vernacular fashion, of Mr. Stefansson's base camp, and here we were hospitably received by Captain Hadley, who was in charge . . . He had been on the *Karluk* when she was lost, full of scientists and all sorts of expensive and elaborate equipment, and bore no small part in bringing the survivors to Wrangel Island, there lying many months until rescued by the *King and Winge*. Having just read the *Last Voyage of the 'Karluk'*

it was illuminating in many ways to hear Captain Hadley's account.

But what interested me most keenly was his statement that while on Wrangel Island, again and again, on clear days, he had seen land with mountain tops far to the north-east . . .

I plied Hadley with questions: There could be no possibility that it was cloud banks he saw or mirage? How could it be when it lay 'always in the same place and bore always the same shape'? Could he make any estimate of the distance? It was very far off, perhaps an hundred miles, perhaps more; it was impossible to say, but it had bold rugged mountain peaks covered with snow in places and in places bare. I reminded him of the *Jeannette* drift, of the *Vincennes* voyage, of Berry in the *Rodgers*. Yes, he knew of the two former though he seemed to think there was some doubt about the last, but it did not matter how many said there was no land there, he had seen it again and again, and had no more doubt about it than about the island we were on now. How many times altogether could he say that he had distinctly seen it? Well, he had made no count; every thoroughly clear day, and he said that though clear days were rare, when they were clear they were wonderfully clear. Had he seen the land twenty times? Yes, fully twenty and probably more.

So there it stands: Rodgers did not see Wrangel Land for fog, though but a few miles off his course; there may have been other land he did not see; the *Jeannette* drifted steadily north-west away from Herald Island and in this land is reported north-east. And Hadley's testimony agrees remarkably with Kellett's description.

The Testimony of McKinlay

William Laird McKinlay is a Scotchman, a graduate of Glasgow University where he specialized in mathematics and physics. On our expedition he was in charge of the investigations in terrestrial magnetism. Apart from his lack of Arctic experience he was by training about as well equipped as any one could be to report on the phenomena here in question.

Before deciding to publish Hadley's account I wanted McKinlay's story. I quote his letter verbatim, so far as it related to Borden Land. The sketch map is exactly as he drew it.

With reference to what Mr. Hadley may have told you regarding appearance of land, I do not suppose that I can add much, but I can certainly confirm that evidence. The appearance of land was seen only on days when conditions were fine and clear. It bore roughly east to east-north-east from our position in the small bay at Waring Point in which our camp was situated, its northern end being in line with the southern end of Herald Island, and it was visible to the south for a distance roughly four times the length of Herald Island, as the latter presented itself to us in our position at that time. I have not sufficient experience of the effects of mirage in polar regions to be able to say whether such appearances may have been due to such a cause; but probably the fact – and this was to me the one really noteworthy fact – that, making allowance for the slight variations in conditions of visibility on clear days, the outline was on all occasions practically identical, rules the consideration of mirage out of the question, and renders the actual existence of land more probable.

Beyond the outline it was hardly possible for us to note much detail, beyond the fact that the side presented to us seemed to consist for the greater part of its length of cliffs or steep slopes. On one occasion there appeared to be a decided gap, separating the land into two distinct parts; but, whether due to defects in visibility near the surface or not, this was not generally noticeable. It was impossible for us to make even a rough estimate of the distance of the supposed land; but the height at the highest point appeared slightly less than that of Herald Island, although, of course, the fact that it was much farther distant than Herald would mean that this lower altitude was apparent rather than real.

Perhaps I cannot do better than give you an extract of a few brief notes bearing on this, under dates when the land

PLOVER LAND

was seen, together with a rough sketch of the outline and weather notes for each day.

Wednesday, June 17th, 1914

Appearance of land in direction of Herald Island, bearing roughly E.N.E. Apparently much farther off (than Herald Island).

Weather — calm; light airs. Completely overcast in early morning; clear all day thereafter.

OUTLINE SKETCH OF APPEARANCE OF LAND AS SEEN FROM
WRANGEL ISLAND — JULY 3, 1914



Note (under date July 3)

The small cloud of mist resembled that due to open water. The shaded portions on the southern half indicate the presence of what looked like the smallest snow remaining in gullies; the northern half showed no such signs.

W. L. K. K. K.

Friday, June 19th

The island again shows up clearly with unchanged appearance. If land, it is something new and uncharted.

Weather — wind south, light to strong breeze. Cloud — few stray cirrus.

Saturday, June 20th

Our island again showed up clear and unchanged. Hadley and I have decided to name it Borden Land.

Weather — wind south, variable from light to strong. Cloud — few Ci.

Sunday, June 21st

Hadley reports having seen our island again when he went out this morning, but indistinctly.

Weather – wind east, light to moderate breeze. Cloud, Ci.₂₃ fog, not dense, from three till seven P.M.

Friday, June 26th

Our island was again clearly visible, with what appeared to be a gap cutting it in two. The constancy of outline almost convinces us that it is actually land, but it is hard to believe that the *Karluk* drifted through that region without it being sighted.

Weather – wind light and variable. Clear all day; Ci.Cu.₂ in evening.

(Fog and conditions of bad visibility intervened until July 3rd.)

Friday, July 3rd

Our island has been remarkably clear to-day; unchanged outline.

Made a rough sketch of this outline.

Weather – wind at first S.E. light, but later variable. Clear in forenoon; completely overcast later.

From that date until the *King and Wing* arrived, on September 7th, conditions were uniformly bad; indeed, only four days appear in the total of sixty-five which could be described as clear – August 1st to 4th – and probably the fact that we were constantly on the ice or in its neighbourhood in search of game accounts for no mention of our seeing a recurrence of the appearances noted above. In that period of 65 days 22 were foggy or misty, rain fell on 8, and snow on 12; while 17, on which none of these phenomena was noted, were ‘completely overcast.’

From a study of the track of the *Karluk's* drift you will see that from the first week in December the ship was never very far north of the line in which the supposed land appeared to be; and no point on that line is any farther south of the ship's track after December 13th than where land was sighted

on December 29th, bearing S. by W. (Herald Island). Moreover, from December 14th to December 29th every day with two exceptions was clear either all day or part of the day; but I have no knowledge of any appearance of land having been noted by any member of the ship's company during that period. This fact, together with the knowledge that the charts show that region to be more or less sounded, made me very much inclined to doubt the probability of the existence of land in that direction; but so far as the testimony of our vision can go, I can assure you that I can strongly corroborate Mr. Hadley's statements that we did see appearances of land. Indeed, it was, as I have already remarked, the noteworthy fact that the outline was on every occasion practically the same that most impressed me and finally led me to make the rough sketch I enclose.

The following notes on McKinlay's account are pertinent:

1. He refers to the southern end of Herald Island as being north-east from Waring Point, while by the American and British charts it is east or but a few degrees north of east. It is more likely that the charts are wrong either as to the position of Herald Island or as to that of Waring Point than that McKinlay erred so much in giving the direction of the one from the other.

2. That there should be a gap seen in the land on one occasion does not affect the evidence as to the presence of land. I have frequently seen such gaps in lands well known to exist — the cause being either a mirage or a fog bank lying on the land. It is for this reason that some large bays laid down on polar charts are found to exist only on the charts — a gap appearance caused by fog or mirage has been taken for a bay.

3. The hardest blow against Plover Land is struck by McKinlay's statement that from December 14th to December 29th every day with two exceptions was clear and that no land was seen, so far as he knows. According to the chart, the *Karluk* should during this time have been in a northerly direction from Plover Land, and it is well known to all

Arctic travellers that conditions for seeing land to the south can never be more favourable than exactly at this time of year, when any land, no matter how snow-covered, would be seen as a clear silhouette against the southern dawn.

But this statement is offset by the one by Hadley that the Eskimo Kurralluk did see the land to the south during the period in question. Hadley believed it might have been seen by the Eskimo even though it had escaped his own notice. And, because of his experience and habits of close observation, Hadley was certainly more likely to notice it than anyone else, with the possible exception of the Eskimo.

Thus the facts try continually to counterbalance each other, alternately introducing doubt into our certainties and cancelling our doubts. It seems reasonable, however, that if the Borden Land of Hadley and McKinlay and the Plover Land of Kellett are existent they are one and the same. But if the various accounts are to be reconciled, it will be necessary to shift the charted positions of either Point Waring or Herald Island, or both. That may not prove so difficult as it seems, for the observations of our expedition have already shifted the positions of several such well-known landmarks as Cape Parry and Cape Bathurst as much as twenty miles. In the far north faith in the sextant and chronometer occasionally moves mountains from one part of the map to another.

End of Article

This, then, is the evidence Crawford, Galle, Knight and Maurer frequently discussed with me before they left the United States. Maurer had not seen 'Plover Land' when he was on Wrangel, but they took with them to Wrangel a copy of the Geographical Review containing this article, and it was one of their tentative plans to watch for 'Plover Land' from Hadley and McKinlay's vantage at Waring Point and perhaps to make a sledge trip in that direction.

APPENDIX VIII

DISCUSSIONS IN THE PARLIAMENT OF CANADA
ABOUT WRANGEL ISLAND

COPIED FROM 'HOUSE OF COMMONS' DEBATES'

MAY 12th, 1922, In Supply on Naval Service Estimates.
Item: Patrol of Northern Waters of Canada, \$15,000.

Mr. Meighen [Leader of the Opposition]: Will the Minister state what is the policy of the Government towards the Northern islands, with particular reference to those covered by the Stefansson expedition, laid claim to on behalf of Canada, and to Wrangel Island.

Mr. Graham: It is a delicate matter to state the policy of the Government on that question.

Mr. Meighen: Has the Government any policy?

Mr. Fielding: What we have we hold.

Mr. Meighen: I would recommend the Government never to fall away from that principle.

Mr. Graham: Some people have failed to do that.

Mr. Meighen: The Government failed once, but I think if they had the same thing to do over again they would act differently.

Mr. Graham: The old Government.

Mr. Meighen: Yes, the old Government my hon. friend was in. It is well known there is a dispute as to Wrangel Island. The question of the proper attitude of Canada towards that island is doubtless before the Government. This vote has to do with these matters, and I am asking if the Government is in a position to say what its views are with relation to the retention of Wrangel Island or the continuance of Canada's claim thereto; and the same words apply to the other islands covered by the expedition.

Mr. Graham: The policy of the Government, as I understand it, is as just expressed by the Minister of Finance — what we have we hold.

Mr. Meighen: Well, have we Wrangel Island?

Mr. Graham: Yes, as I understand it, and we propose to retain it.

Mr. Fielding: We had it in December, and we have not let it go.

Mr. Shaw: I think there is probably, as the leader of the Opposition has said, a great deal more to this matter than appears on the surface. I understand that the United States have published a map in which they show all the lands north of Melville Island, I think, as being a country which does not belong to anybody, and which is consequently open for discovery by any nation whose expedition may happen to locate there. I think it is a matter of the utmost importance that we should not lose sight of the fact that the extreme northern part of this country should be preserved to Canada. It may not seem of much importance now, but I have no doubt that in the years to come it will be a matter of very great regret if this or any other Government fails to take proper measures to ensure that that country belongs to and is secured and maintained by Canada.

Mr. Guthrie: I can only say in addition to what has been said by the Hon. member for West Calgary, that this question is being discussed in the United States papers now. Within the last month it has been discussed in the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, and there is no doubt that certain interested parties in the United States intend to make a claim to Wrangel Island as United States territory by right of prior discovery. In my view, from the little inquiry I have made, I am satisfied that the claim is unfounded. There is no right of prior discovery beyond the right of Canada or Great Britain in that respect. However, this matter is going to come to the front in the very near future, and I think it is high time that this Government should take a stand on the matter and make its stand known to the world. It will be a matter for international discussion very soon unless we are going to forego our claims and let the United States take over the island. Whether the island is of very much practical importance I do not know, but parties in the United States seem to think it is. In fact, one paper says that from one point of view, the mineral wealth of Wrangel Island is far greater than that of Alaska. That may be

problematical, but it is the basis of the claim which is made by certain interests in the United States.

Mr. Mackenzie King [Prime Minister]: The Government has had interviews with Mr. Stefansson. I do not know that it is in the public interest to disclose the full nature of those interviews, but I might say that at the present time the Canadian flag is flying on Wrangel Island, and there are Canadians on the island, members of a previous expedition of Stefansson's. Mr. Stefansson is about to take a ship up to Wrangel Island with some of his men, and has recently had it fitted out with supplies. The Government certainly maintains the position that Wrangel Island is part of the property of this country.

Mr. Meighen: That is clear and definite, and of course the Prime Minister knows that the men that were there were there long before he had been in his present position and therefore some considerable length of time. I may say as well that there may be claim to this island on behalf of Russia, a claim based very largely on the geographical location of the island. The Island of Ellesmere, on the west coast of Greenland, is also one to which the Government should give some attention. An expedition was about to be launched by a Dane, with, I think, the approval of the Danish Government designed to make some occupational claim in Ellesmere island, and it was anticipated, probably, to base on that occupational claim certain rights of Denmark in the island. I call that matter to the attention of the Government, so that whatever position Canada is in with respect to Ellésmere Island will be held, because, in my judgment, Ellesmere Island is of greater consequence than Wrangel Island.

May 29th, 1922, On the Orders of the Day:

Hon. R. J. Manion: The Washington *Times* states that the United States Government has decided that Wrangel Island is properly the property of Russia, and that it should be held in trust until conditions in Russia have become settled. Has this question been drawn to the attention of the Government, and, if so, is any action contemplated?

THE ADVENTURE OF WRANGEL ISLAND

Mr. Mackenzie King: The matter is now for the first time drawn to the attention of the Government by the remarks of my hon. friend.

May 31st, 1923, In Supply on Department of Marine and Fisheries Estimates:

Item: Patrol of Northern waters of Canada, \$15,000.

Mr. Bancroft: Will the Minister explain this item?

Mr. Lapointe: It is to provide for the publication of reports of the Canadian Arctic Expedition. . . .

Mr. Hanson: I am not interested in the names of all the volumes, but I would like the Minister to tell us who owns Wrangel Island.

Mr. Lapointe: I should like to know myself.

June 14th, 1923, In Supply on Department of the Interior Estimates:

Mr. Shaw: Does the Wrangel Island vote come under any of these items?

Mr. Stewart: No.

Mr. Shaw: Where can I find it?

Mr. Stewart: There is no vote for Wrangel Island.

Mr. Shaw: Do we own it or not?

Mr. Stewart: I do not think we own it.

Mr. McMaster: Hear, hear.

Mr. Shaw: I am glad to hear it.

Mr. Stewart: Mr. Stefansson is very much interested in Wrangel Island, and he is bringing the matter to the attention of the British Government.

Sir Henry Drayton: I thought we were told last year we owned it. Has there been any change in Government policy with regard to Wrangel Island? Is this not a case of what we have we hold?

(No answer; incident closed.)

March 11th, 1924, Debate on the 'Address.'

Mr. A. E. Ross-Kingston: A short time ago, with a great deal of éclat, the Government announced that the flag had been hoisted on Wrangel Island, and that it would stay there. Where is it to-day, and by whose order?

THE RUSSIAN VISIT TO WRANGEL ISLAND

THE only known Russian visit to Wrangel Island previous to that of the *Red October* in 1924 is that of the steamer *Vaigatch*, under Commander Konstantin V. Loman, in 1911. No published record of this visit is available in the western world except a brief note in the German scientific journal, *Petermann's Mitteilungen*. Just before going to press I have been fortunate in securing some verbal information from Commander Nicholas A. Transehe, formerly of the Imperial Russian Navy, who is now in New York. I have summarized below my conversation with him, and he has read what I have written to see that I understood him correctly.

[Two ships, the *Taimir* and *Vaigatch*, composed the great Russian hydrographic expedition which operated for several years to the north of Asiatic Russia. They did much solid scientific work. Their most spectacular result was the discovery of Nicholas II Land, a large island to the north of the north tip of Asia. Commander Transehe did not join the expedition till 1912, then with the rank of assistant to the commander.]

The summer of 1911 the *Vaigatch* had been to the Kolyma on a hydrographic survey. On her return eastward she succeeded in making a landing near the south-west corner of Wrangel Island. So far as Commander Transehe remembers from what his comrades of that ship told him later, the *Vaigatch* was at anchor only long enough to wait for a clear, starlit night for exact astronomical observations. She may, therefore, have been at Wrangel Island anything from a day to a week. Having established the astronomical position of the landing place and erected a beacon there, the *Vaigatch* attempted to proceed northward along the west coast of Wrangel for survey purposes, but was forced offshore by the ice and was only able to circumnavigate the island going

north, then east and south at a distance so great that she could not contribute anything to the definite outlining of the coast, although they made some rough judgments of land contours in the interior by visual measurements and estimates from shipboard.

Commander Transehe says that there has been published in Russian a book about the expedition of the *Taimir* and *Vaigatch*. This was written by Baron Klodt, who was at that time a naval lieutenant. The book was issued by the Naval Ministry of St. Petersburg, probably in the spring of 1912. No copies of this book were known to Commander Transehe to exist in or near New York where he could consult it.

The expedition determined very exactly the astronomical position of many points on the Siberian coast. While their map of Wrangel Island is taken practically unaltered from that made by the United States Navy, except for the determination of the one position, it is more reliable than the American maps with reference to the position of the Siberian mainland, and gives, therefore, the best estimate of the distance of Wrangel Island from Russian territory. According to the Russian surveys shown me by Commander Transehe, the south-west corner of Wrangel Island (the nearest point to the mainland) is about equally distant from Capes Yakan, Billings and North as they have been located by the Russians — about eighty-four or eighty-five English miles. The British and American maps we had when writing this book give the shortest distance from the mainland variously at from ninety to one hundred and ten miles, which accounts for the hundred-mile approximation frequently used in the text.

STAKING WRANGEL ISLAND¹

*How Hope of Empire in the North may shift the Pole to the
Centre of the World*

BY D. M. LE BOURDAIS

VILHJALMUR STEFANSSON, the polar explorer, Carl Lomen, the reindeer king of Alaska, and I were sitting in Stefansson's room at the Harvard Club in New York one day early last spring.

'How would you like to take Wrangel Island off my hands, Carl?' asked Stefansson quite casually.

'Well, though I hadn't thought of it before, I like the idea,' Carl answered. 'But why give it up?'

'I can't afford the luxury any longer,' replied Stefansson.

He had been holding it for Canada since 1921, but so far the Canadian Government had not acknowledged his work officially. The Russians had put up a bluff, and apparently the British Government had been fooled by it. Yet the island was discovered by a Briton, Captain Kellett, in 1849, and until 1911 no Russian had ever set foot upon it. As a matter of fact, the United States has a much better claim than Russia. The first landing was made by Americans, and the first flag ever to fly over Wrangel was the Stars and Stripes, hoisted by Captain Calvin Hooper, of the American Navy, in 1881.

'Just how expensive would it be to me to take over your interest?' Carl asked Stefansson.

'Well, there are thirteen persons on the island, one white man, Charles Wells, and twelve Eskimos. They have been there since last year. They were equipped for two years, and

¹ By permission of Mr. Le Bourdais, and the editor, we reprint this article from *Asia* for April, 1925. It is used partly to show the viewpoint of an independent writer about Wrangel Island and certain other matters dealt with in the body of this book. But mainly we use it because of the solution it gives to one of the mysteries of our 1913-18 expedition — the fate of First Officer Anderson and his party. We have here the tragic ending of the story Captain Hadley tells in Chapter 4 of this book.

have been trapping on a share basis. You would have to send a ship to visit them this summer, but I believe your half of the fur-catch would more than repay you.'

'I am not especially concerned with the financial aspects of the case,' replied Carl. 'What appeals to me is the thought that perhaps I might be able to add a valuable island to the territory of the United States.'

'Yes, just so,' agreed Stefansson. 'Aviation will certainly revolutionize thought about the Far North. I think, myself, that Wrangel Island, particularly, is likely to become of great strategic value. But so many people are blind! They want to see a dollars-and-cents value to-day. It's as if some one had asked Columbus in 1492 for the current market value of the lands he discovered!'

'I wonder if by taking over your interest I could claim for the United States the benefit of your three years' occupancy?' asked Carl.

'It might be worth trying,' Stefansson replied.

'Your proposal appeals to me,' said Carl. 'I'll let you know in a day or so.'

The conversation switched to prospects in the Alaskan reindeer industry and to Stefansson's and the Hudson's Bay Company's reindeer-raising venture on Baffin Island, north of Labrador. But while Stefansson and Carl talked reindeer, my mind kept reverting to Wrangel Island. There was a fascination about this piece of rocky land in the far-off Arctic Ocean beyond the Siberian coast. Its name had been associated with a succession of arctic tragedies. Already fifteen men had lost their lives in its vicinity. The Russians had threatened to send a ship to arrest Wells and his companions, confiscate their furs, and raise the Red Flag. If Carl Lomen were also to send a ship — to take possession for the United States — and the vessels were to meet at the island or elsewhere in the Arctic, more tragedy might be written. At least there would be a story. Before we parted that evening, I had made tentative arrangements with Carl to accompany his ship to Wrangel Island. A few days later he told me he had accepted Stefansson's offer, and we started off.

Seattle is the gateway of the United States into Alaska. When my taxi was still a couple of blocks from Pier 2 that morning last June on which I boarded the *Victoria* for Nome, I thought half Seattle must be sailing too. There was a greater jam about the dock than one would find at the New York pier of the *Leviathan*, and every one seemed to know every one else. But the boat actually pulled away on time for a run of thirteen days.

I was heading north! In my father's day the adventurous went west. But the western frontier is no more. In its place is the great northern frontier — Northern Canada, Alaska, and Northern Siberia, as well as the islands lying in the Arctic Ocean. A new empire of the north! The supposedly ice-bound regions of the Arctic have suddenly become a possible field for international competition. But why?

The answer may be discovered by study of an ordinary school globe. The Arctic Ocean, it appears, is the smallest of the oceans, and is surrounded by the world's greatest land masses, North America on one side and the long northern coast of Eurasia on the other. The shortest distances between the most important points in the eastern and western hemispheres lie northward. For instance, north from London, over the polar regions and then south to Tokio, the distance is less than five thousand miles. If one were to go by way of Montreal and Vancouver, the distance would be eleven thousand two hundred miles. By way of the Trans-Siberian Railway it would be 8,000 miles. A saving of three thousand miles is an important factor. Proportionate savings may be made between New York and Tokio, and so forth.

Until the age of aviation, world traffic was forced to follow the longer routes. The Arctic Ocean was not navigable because of floating ice. But the air is quite as navigable above the polar regions as anywhere else. In fact, in some respects, flying conditions are better in the north than in many other places. In flying across the Arctic in July, for instance, an air-vessel could leave England in the morning and, by directing its course through the area of the midnight sun, arrive in China or Japan without encountering darkness except on the

last night of the voyage. But it is likely that, as the amount of meteorological data increases and the air routes of the world are more fully charted, the advantages of daylight will become less important and flying through the arctic winter darkness will offer no exceptional difficulties. Neither will the cold. Aviators encounter almost every day, in flying above the so-called temperate zone, temperatures quite as low as those likely to be found in the Arctic, even in winter. For coldness increases not only with latitude, but also with altitude, although not so markedly in the higher latitudes.

That is to say, it might be a hundred in the shade on the surface at Dayton, Ohio, for instance, and yet be seventy below zero at an elevation of twenty thousand feet; yet at the North Pole, when the surface temperature was sixty below zero, it would probably not be much colder at the twenty-thousand-foot level. Of course, flying will not be conducted as a rule at the twenty-thousand-foot level, either in the Arctic or in the United States, but the point I wish to make is that low temperatures are a feature of aviation almost everywhere. Temperature and darkness, then, can be overcome, but distance will always remain. It is because the Arctic in this respect holds the trumps that many of the great aerial routes of the future must lie across the polar region.

Popular notions of the Arctic are a reminder that seventy years ago most of the territory west of the Mississippi was generally believed also to be a barren waste. Had it not been for the discovery of gold in California, the Great American Desert myth would have persisted much longer than it did.¹ California gold made possible the building of transcontinental railways, which developed the north-west. In like manner aviation produces the arctic aerial routes, which will be used at first chiefly for important through traffic. In a few days' flight, for instance, instead of a sea voyage of several weeks, a British contractor in competition with a Frenchman for the building of a Chinese railroad could land his engineer with detailed specifications in Peking. But as aircraft become

¹ For an historical account of the rise and decline of the 'Great American Desert,' see Stefansson: *The Northward Course of Empire*.

more perfect mechanically and the air lanes are better charted, the day-to-day air commerce of the world will more and more come to adopt the northern route. Thus will die most of the myths regarding climatic difficulties in polar regions, and those great northern spaces will be settled and have their resources exploited.

Thus will be founded the new empire of the north. It will cover about five million square miles — an area two-thirds again as large as the United States. Most of this territory is beyond the cereal belt, but much of it is erroneously supposed to be always covered with snow and ice. To be sure, winters are cold and lengthy in the Far North, but the summer, though short, is warm, with long days when vegetation grows amazingly. Then the Arctic is a flower-garden. A Texas cattleman, waking suddenly in Northern Alaska, would go crazy with delight: he would see grass-lands such as he had never even dreamed of before. These grasslands will one day provide pasturage for millions of reindeer, ovibos, and buffaloes — animals native to the country and capable of living at large without shelter or care. Rich is the northland in minerals, also, and in fisheries, furs, and other resources. In many places are vast areas of timber suitable for pulp. This wealth has always been thought of as too far off ever to be available. But the airplane is boosting realty values all along the northern frontier. Rivalry for possession of Wrangel Island is but a symbol of the fact that the polar regions are shifting from the outskirts of the world to its centre.

Vilhjalmur Stefansson was the first to see the geographical revolution that is to follow the development of aeronautics, On his advice the Canadian Government is now sending a ship each year to visit the islands north of the Canadian mainland and forestall claims by other countries. It was because he recognized the coming importance of Wrangel Island that he sent a party there in 1921 to hold it for Canada. Stefansson thinks in terms of continents and centuries. He sees the Arctic spanned by a network of aerial routes, with great air-vessels flying on regular time-tables

over vast expanses filled with grazing herds. He watches the frontier-line of human life moving ever northward from the present overcrowded centres of population.

The Arctic, so soon to be no longer *terra incognita*, has meteorological secrets to yield. Beyond Wrangel Island somewhere is a spot where United States weather is brewed. The principal storms that cross the American continent travel from west to east. Along the Atlantic seaboard it is much easier to foretell the weather than on the Pacific Coast, because the forecaster has information at his disposal from farther west. But on the Pacific Coast at present very little data can be received. A wireless-station on Wrangel Island would be of more value to meteorology than almost any other single station in this hemisphere. Figure the operators in the wireless-tower of their comfortable little stone house, attentively watching their meteorological instruments while a blizzard shrieks along the eaves. One of the watchers clicks off warning of a frigid wave that is speeding eastward and southward. In far-off California, where golden oranges hang ready for the pickers, the word flashes among the orchards. Immediately the citrus-growers are astir. Soon the smudges, or possibly more scientific devices, are in readiness to neutralize the frosty breath from beyond Wrangel Island.

On my arrival at Nome, the rendezvous of our party of prospective voyagers to the island, I met Carl Lomen's father, who is federal judge of Western Alaska, and Carl's three brothers, Ralph, Alfred and Harry, who are associated in the reindeer industry. Great dredges work the gold beaches of Nome, but still it lives chiefly in the memory of departed greatness and in the hope of glories yet to come. So small is it now that its population just about doubles with the coming of the first passenger-boat in the spring. No longer is it the 'poor man's camp' to which the adventurous flock from all over the world on the chance of picking up gold in the streets. Gold first made Alaska famous. But its most lasting reputation may one day be due to the reindeer. And if so, there will be linked with it the name Lomen.

Carl and his brothers immediately took up the matter of

sending a ship to Wrangel Island. While we were considering which of a number of ships might be engaged, a three-masted schooner slid in from the south. Nome has no harbour. It is an open roadstead, and ships, no matter of what draft, cannot approach nearer than a mile off-shore. The schooner was soon recognized as the *Herman*, a whaler that has been sailing arctic seas for many years. In a short while her skipper, Captain Louis Lane, was ashore, and before long we heard that he was bound for Wrangel Island.

The Lomens were acquainted with him, and I had heard of him from Stefansson and others. We knew him to be an able ice-navigator, adventurous and excitement-loving. What was his object in going to Wrangel Island? We soon found out. A telephone-call brought him to the Lomens' office. I had expected to see an older man. He was under middle age, of athletic build and appearance, his face darkly tanned by sea and wind. He said he intended to hunt walrus north of the Siberian coast, and in the fall to kill bow-head whales in the vicinity of Wrangel Island.

After some negotiation it was arranged that Lane should go to Wrangel Island on behalf of the Lomens to raise the Stars and Stripes and take possession in the name of the United States. He was to bring off whatever furs the party might have on hand, and, if they wished to leave, he was to convey them back to Alaska. 'No such luck!' he replied when asked if he thought there was any chance of meeting the Russians. We were all more or less inclined to think they were merely bluffing. It was also arranged that I should accompany the *Herman*. Since the ship was not allowed to carry passengers, I would ship as a seaman at a nominal wage of one dollar a month.

By the time the sun set that night, at about eleven o'clock, our plans were all made for a start next day. The sun went down almost in the north, and the northern sky from horizon to zenith was a shimmering colour vivid at the horizon but shading off into the most delicate of pastel tints. The sea as smooth as glass reflected the heavens as in a mirror, drenching in liquid flame the ships that lay in the roadstead. In little

more than an hour this gorgeous spectacle was reversed in a glorious sunrise. June 17th, the day of our sailing, had begun.

The *Herman*, an old whaler of about 325 tons with a 250 horse-power Diesel engine, was slow. With a fair wind she was good for only about five or six knots. Captain Lane expected to follow the ice; for in the spring the ocean currents run strongly northward, carrying the floes through Bering Strait into the Arctic. The captain planned to cruise about the southern edge of the pack, killing walruses and filling the hold of his vessel with skins and ivory. As soon as ice conditions were favourable – that is, about the middle of August – we would slip through to Wrangel Island.

The evening of Midsummer day found us anchored in the lee of the little Diomede, one of two rocky islets in the middle of Bering Strait. Since we were still south of the arctic circle, the sun would set just before midnight – that is, when viewed from sea-level. I decided to see the midnight sun from the top of the island. The sight was well worth the two-hours' climb. To the east lay the Alaskan coast, with the bold form of Cape Prince of Wales jutting into the foreground. To the west was the Siberian shore, with East Cape prominent. South of me stretched Bering Sea, and to the north lay the mysterious Arctic. Standing there alone on top of that chunk of rock, midway between two continents, with the sun dipping toward the northern horizon and quickly rising again, I felt strangely thrilled.

Two days later the main crank-shaft snapped, and we were compelled to put back to Nome under sail for repairs. . . .

It was September 7th when the *Herman* turned her prow toward Wrangel Island once more. So late in the year most ships were getting out of the Arctic, but Captain Lane still hoped to make up for lost time. The season had been exceptionally stormy, however, with the pack-ice ranging much farther south than usual. Already two ships had been wrecked. We had no sooner passed through Bering Strait than the full force of the storm struck us. For three days we battled with the heavy seas, and finally we were compelled to seek shelter in the lee of the Alaskan coast.

After a few days at anchor, we made good progress westward. But on the morning of September 15th there was ice, and with the ice came fog. Shortly after noon we sighted Herald Island, thirty-eight miles east of Wrangel. About an hour later the captain called down from the crow's-nest that Wrangel was in sight. And there on the starboard bow, yet about thirty miles distant, I got my first glimpse of that famed island of sinister repute. I could see a line of perpendicular cliffs just emerging from the fog.

Ahead of us the ice became heavier. The captain said we would follow the edge of the pack westward in the hope that somewhere an open lead would allow us to go through. Next day a blinding snowstorm came down upon us as we drifted outside the line of heavy ice. The following day was clear. The captain called me to the crow's-nest. Again we had come within view of Wrangel.

About thirty-five miles distant, and filling the whole horizon to the north, lay the south coast of the island: precipitous cliffs to the eastward at Cape Hawaii; low, undulating coast-line ahead of us, rising to higher ground away to the westward and lost in the mist. Forming a sort of spine, ran a range of rounded mountains, the whole covered with fresh snow. The dot that is Wrangel on the map does not suggest so huge a mass of land. But as I viewed it that day from the masthead, I could easily understand how those who first sighted it believed it to be part of an arctic continent. It is about eighty miles in length, and about two thousand five hundred square miles in area. It certainly does look substantial. Somewhere along that coast, somewhere on the beach as yet too low for us to descry even with the glasses, was the camp of Wells and his Eskimos, doubtless even then wondering if a ship would arrive that year.

But between us and them lay a glistening belt from twenty to thirty miles in width. Above, the sky showed the bright blink that tells the arctic traveller of the presence of ice. Only here and there, and of little extent, could any water-cloud – the black reflection of open water in the sky – be seen. Until that ice should break up and move away, there

was little hope of our getting through. We must wait.

While we cruised back and forth along the edge of the ice, shrouded a great part of the time in fog, I worked upon a memorial tablet, which we hoped to erect over the grave of Lorne Knight, buried on Wrangel Island.

Lorne Knight was a member of the party sent by Vilhjalmur Stefansson in 1921 to hold Wrangel Island for Canada. With him were Allan Crawford, Fred Maurer and Milton Galle. Crawford was a Canadian and in nominal command of the party. The others were Americans. Knight and Maurer had been with Stefansson as members of the Canadian Arctic Expedition of 1913-18, and were experienced men. Maurer, who was one of the survivors of Stefansson's *Kar-luk*, had spent six months on Wrangel in 1914. The four men of this 1921 expedition took with them from Nome an Eskimo woman, Ada Blackjack, to make the clothing of caribou or reindeer skins or seal-skins so necessary in the north. During their second winter on the island, Knight, weakened by the meagre diet, grew sick with scurvy and, in spite of Ada Blackjack's nursing, he died the following spring. Meanwhile Crawford, Maurer and Galle had set out across the ice for Siberia, one hundred and ten miles away, but they never arrived, and it is generally believed they perished by breaking through thin ice. Ada Blackjack was the sole survivor. When the ship sent by Stefansson in 1923 arrived at Wrangel Island, she had been living entirely alone for two months except for the company of a cat. It was then that Charles Wells and the twelve Eskimos were put ashore to continue the occupation.

Eight days after we first sighted Wrangel Island, we came nearest to getting through. The ice seemed to be in motion toward the south-west, and a lead had opened off Cape Hawaii. Captain Lane worked the ship into the ice, following the lead farther into the pack. By four in the afternoon we had approached to within six or seven miles of the beach, and could probably have gone right in. But we should still be about thirty miles east of the place where we hoped to find the party.

If the lead continued to open during the night, we should have no difficulty in getting through on the morrow. But if it closed, we should be in a bad position inshore, and we might have to spend the winter on Wrangel Island. It was desirable that we should establish communication with the Wells party if possible. But they were provisioned for two years and, barring accidents, would be all right for another year, if we failed. And we were not outfitted to spend a winter in the Arctic.

We worked out of the lead into open water that night. Morning justified our course; for the lead had closed. Day broke with a dropping barometer and a driving mist that froze on the rigging as it fell. We cruised westward until we were opposite Doubtful Harbour, thirty miles away. Our masts should have been visible on shore, but not then nor at any other time did we see any indication that the island was inhabited.

Towards evening the wind freshened considerably and heavy clouds obscured the sky. Plainly we were in for a storm. By midnight it was blowing a small hurricane. All the next day and the next it continued. The wind, biting and keen from off the ice, whistled in the rigging, and the seas pounded the old ship as if they would batter her to pieces.

When the storm abated, we found ourselves within a few miles of Herald Island. The ice had cleared away from its western side, and we were able to gain shelter there, free of the howling wind and the lashing waves! The island is about six miles in length, and our anchorage was near the southern end.

As we were leaving to make a final attempt to get through to Wrangel, Captain Lane decided to cruise northward along the precipitous shores to the extreme tip of the islet, where a strip of gravel beach was visible. 'I see a sledge on the beach and something that looks like the remains of a camp,' he called from the mast-head, as we came nearer. A boat was lowered and we went ashore.

It was one of our few days of sunshine and calm. The gravel spit, sloping gently back for about two hundred yards,

was blanketed with a light layer of snow, blown bare in spots, drifted over in others, and padded with the tracks of arctic foxes and huge polar bears. At the farther edge, near the foot of a steeply sloping shale ridge, the sledge was gauntly outlined, and round about were a number of black objects, which later proved to be tins of pemmican.

We were not long in crossing the intervening space. We saw a large drift-log lying at right angles to the sledge, and beyond it we found what was left of a tent and a bed. The tent had collapsed upon the bed. As we removed the snow and carefully peeled the frozen decayed canvas from what lay beneath, we found human bones, to which adhered fragments of reindeer-skin sleeping bags. From the position of the bones we thought that the men they once were had died in their sleep. There must have been four of them. Animals had not molested the bodies, because not a bone showed a tooth-mark.

It was a fully equipped camp. In addition to the sledge and the pemmican, we found rifles and ammunition, picks, shovels, snow-shoes, ski, knives, a pair of field-glasses and a great variety of other articles heavy and solid enough to have resisted the ravages of storm and sunshine. We found no diaries or records — in fact, no paper of any kind — but from various articles we were able to identify the party as one of two groups of four men from Stefansson's *Karluk*, which sank in 1914 about sixty miles north-east of Wrangel Island.

[Here a paragraph is omitted from Mr. Le Bourdais' article, for it gave his view that these were the remains of James Murray, the oceanographer of our 1913-18 expedition, and his companions, Alister Forbes Mackay, Henri Beuchat and Stanley Morris. When the relics found were brought to San Francisco, they were identified by John Munro, their comrade of the 1913-18 expedition, as belonging to First Officer Alexander Anderson, Second Officer Charles Barker, and the sailors John Brady and A. King. See Hadley's account in Chapter 4, ante.]

Thus we were enabled to throw light on one of the mysteries of the Arctic, but we did not get through to Wrangel

Island. After enduring another stormy week, during which the ice kept encroaching from the north and threatened to cut off our retreat, we headed south on October 4. The Stars and Stripes were raised on Herald Island, but not on Wrangel. Wells and his companions, we thought with regret, would have to spend another winter in their lonely camp.

But when we reached Nome, we discovered that the Russians had beaten us. The *Red October*, carrying a company of Red Guards, had reached Wrangel Island on August 20th. Evidently the ice had been kinder to them than to us. Certainly no boat could have got through during the twenty days in which we fought the ice in sight of Wrangel. The Russians raised the Red Flag and took formal possession of the island. They arrested Wells and the Eskimos, confiscated their furs, and carried them past their homes in Alaska to Vladivostok, where Wells and two of the Eskimos died. The remaining Eskimos, after being fleeced of their possessions, were deported from Siberia, and have been brought back to the United States by the American Red Cross.

There are some people who hold that, because Wrangel Island is nearest to Siberia, it should belong to Russia. That rule might possibly have simplified history and geography had it been adopted at an earlier date. It would, for instance, have given Great Britain to France, Portugal to Spain, and so on, all over the world. Those who argue thus contend, however, that such a rule, no matter how ridiculous it may appear elsewhere, could reasonably be applied in the Arctic.

With the aviation plans of Amundsen and Nansen and the schemes astir in Washington for one or other of the great dirigibles of the American Navy, it is safe to predict a successful polar flight within two or three years. The *Karluk* survivors saw geese flying north over Wrangel Island in 1914. Where were they going? Geese do not breed in the ocean or on the ice. This circumstance alone would not be sufficient to give colour to the belief that undiscovered land exists somewhere in the polar area, the view of most authorities.

What is Wrangel Island good for in itself, aside from

aeronautical and meteorological purposes? The very day we sighted the island we captured an immense polar bear and killed another. Where the polar bear roams, foxes are also found. Arctic fox skins are valuable, as the Russians know; for they confiscated one hundred and fifty-seven fox skins and forty polar-bear skins belonging to the Wells party. Wrangel is also a centre for huge walrus herds. It is in the track of the great bowhead whales that come down from the north in the autumn and return in the spring. From the point of view of hunting and trapping, therefore, it is valuable.

Its principal value, however, to my mind, lies in its use as a scientific station. It is admirably adapted not only for weather observation, but also for the study of marine life. Some day, probably from a base on Wrangel Island, a William Beebe of the north will tell us where the bowhead whales spend their winter, or what the myriads of marine organisms are that these monsters feed upon. He may picture for us the immense clam-beds that provide food for the tens of thousands of huge walruses or introduce us to the little fishes that live in cavities in the floating ice-fields.

In the meantime Wrangel Island will be prized for its strategic possibilities as an air-base, for its potential mineral resources, and for its game. According to Moscow and Leningrad newspapers, the Russians are determined to hold it against all comers. On the other hand, the Lomens have announced their intention of sending another ship this year to carry out plans frustrated last year. British naval and aerial authorities have a keen appreciation of the value of Wrangel Island, and, now that a Conservative Government is again in power and the Russian Treaty repudiated, it is not certain that Great Britain will be so willing to allow this important northern outpost to slip from its grasp. But for the present Wrangel Island is again deserted by all save the polar bear and the arctic fox.

At the time this book was written, there seemed no hope that we should ever know anything further about any of the

eight men who, in parties of four, were separated from the main party after the *Karluk* sank in January, 1914, and who were lost somewhere on the one-hundred-and-sixty-mile road to Siberia. Since then a partial solution has come – cruel as it was bound to be, for there was no other chance.

After much doubt as to which is better, silence or the bitter truth, we decided to print the applicable part of an article written by the Canadian traveller and journalist, D. M. Le Bourdais, and published in the *Asia Magazine* for April, 1925.

We knew the tragedy, but that any trace of it should have been found on Herald Island was surprising. A search had been made there some weeks after both parties of four were lost, as described on page 715 of *The Friendly Arctic*. Nothing was discovered, but that might so easily have been because traces had been covered up by heavy accumulations of snow under the cliffs that flank such narrow beaches as there are on Herald Island. The real reason why we expected nothing, was that the party of Beuchat, Mackay, Morris and Murray had last been seen far from there and headed definitely for another island, Wrangel. The party of First Mate John Anderson had been lost; they must have been drowned in ice pressure some distance offshore, we thought.

But now Mr. Le Bourdais describes finding the remains of Murray's party on Herald Island, a result for which we were not prepared by any knowledge we previously possessed.

It seems to me that Mr. Le Bourdais' analysis of the evidence is probably correct in the main.

Most arctic travellers have described occasions upon which their camps were nearly buried by drifting snow. Both explorers and Eskimos have frequent narrow escapes from being stifled by snowdrifts when in camp. We avoid the danger chiefly by exercising great care in picking camp sites that are open to every wind; for the same lee that would shelter the tent would produce the accumulation of snow.

But on the shore of Herald Island it is not easy to avoid such a lee. You may pitch a camp that is safe from burial by the wind then blowing, but there may be a change of direc-

tion in the night. Such a change may not have come the first night the party were on Herald Island, but with the camp once pitched there was a natural temptation to leave it where it was. After one or several nights, there must have been a blizzard from a new direction, with the tent covered up and the resulting tragedy.

It is difficult to say which is harder to endure, the certainty which we now have of the manner in which the end came, or the former uncertainty of place and circumstance.

At the time when the landing was made by Captain Louis L. Lane and Mr. Le Bourdais, a fresh accumulation of autumn snow may have hidden a good many relics and perhaps some records. We hope that a ship may be able to get there earlier this season than in 1924, to make a suitable burial and to erect at least a temporary mark at the graves. Until that visit we may have some hope that diaries or other records can be found.

The price is already high that has been paid for the advance of knowledge in this difficult part of the Arctic Sea. On Herald Island where Kellett landed in 1849 are the bones of two Scots, an Englishman and a Frenchman, explorers in British service. On Wrangel Island, which Kellett discovered, are the graves of two Canadians, a Norwegian, and an American who died in British service, too. On the ocean bottom to the north of these islands are the remains of four British sailors, and between the islands and the mainland, somewhere, rest two Americans and a Canadian who died in the same cause.

These many young and promising lives are a costly sacrifice for two disputed islands and for the knowledge gained by two expeditions. There is no answer or justification unless it be in a sentence written into the preface to this book by John Irvine Knight, the father of one of the twelve who died: 'It . . . (is) the price necessary for the advancement of civilization.'

THE CONTRIBUTORS TO THE WRANGEL ISLAND
RELIEF OF 1923

THE relatives of the Wrangel Island party and I are for ever indebted to Mr. Griffith Brewer for his generosity in advancing against hoped-for public subscriptions the full amount of money we needed to send the *Donaldson* to Wrangel Island without delay. I wrote him asking for the list of the eventual subscribers, and he sent it, so we are able to present it here. I wanted also a long explanatory letter from him, but with his usual modest reticence he has written far too little. One thing I hoped he would explain I must say here – under the formal heading of ‘The British Wright Co., Ltd.,’ who made the largest single contribution, are hidden the names of Orville Wright, the inventor (with his brother) of the aeroplane, and of Griffith Brewer himself, who between them owned 80 or 90 per cent of the stock of the British Wright Company and therefore gave most of the £550. Mr. Brewer therefore contributed much more than the £570 11s. 6d. which he acknowledges having supplied as a deficiency.

I have also just secured the reluctant permission of Mr. Orville Wright to say that he was my ‘American friend’ mentioned in the body of this book, who loaned me the money which sent the *Teddy Bear* on her vain but faithful attempt to reach the party on Wrangel Island the summer of 1922.

Letter from Griffith Brewer to Vilhjalmur Stefansson

DEAR STEFANSSON, –

I welcome the opportunity of recording the names of those who contributed to the fund for sending the *Donaldson* to relieve the four men and the Eskimo woman who had been for two lonely years on Wrangel Island.

The amount cabled to Alaska for the costs of the expedition was £2,362 8s., which has been subscribed as follows:

THE ADVENTURE OF WRANGEL ISLAND

	£	s.	d.
The British Wright Co., Ltd.	550	0	0
Anonymous	500	0	0
A. C. Howeson, Esq.	100	0	0
Lt.-Col. F. K. McClean	50	0	0
A. M. Fry, Esq.	50	0	0
H. T. Cadbury, Esq.	50	0	0
Lord Lee of Fareham	25	0	0
Lord Woolavington	25	0	0
Lord Egerton of Tatton	20	0	0
S. W. Mappin, Esq.	20	0	0
E. Cockshaw, Esq.	20	0	0
Brig.-Gen. Hon. R. White	15	0	0
Rev. H. F. Maitland	10	0	0
H. Oswald Short, Esq.	10	0	0
Viscount Milner	10	0	0
C. B. B. Smith-Bingham, Esq.	10	0	0
E. S. Rashleigh, Esq.	10	0	0
Duke of Sutherland	10	0	0
Mrs. Clegg	10	0	0
Mrs. Rushton & daughters	10	0	0
'E. S. M. S.'	10	0	0
Mrs. Rothwell	10	0	0
Dame J. Stancomb-Wills	10	0	0
Mrs. Smith	10	0	0
Misses I. & H. Farquhar	6	0	0
Mrs. McClean	5	5	0
George Roberts, Esq.	5	5	0
Sir Arthur Conan Doyle	5	5	0
George G. Harrap & Co., Ltd.	5	5	0
F. G. Adair Roberts, Esq., J.P.	5	5	0
George H. Pope, Esq.	5	0	0
Miss M. F. Gell	5	0	0
Anonymous	5	0	0
Sir Alfred Paton	5	0	0
Geo. Albert Ure, Esq.	5	0	0
Francis Ransom, Esq.	5	0	0
Sir F. C. Gardiner	5	0	0

THE WRANGEL ISLAND RELIEF

	£	s.	d.
Col. H. Burden	5	0	0
'C. J. H.'	5	0	0
'H. N.'	5	0	0
Sir Mortimer Singer	5	0	0
'R. F. J.'	5	0	0
Miss L. Rothwell	5	0	0
Sir Michael & Lady Sadler	5	0	0
Archdeacon Beresford Potter	5	0	0
'T. C. A.'	5	0	0
S. G. Stopford Sachville, Esq.	5	0	0
Lord Hatherton	5	0	0
'L. S. A.'	5	0	0
Mrs. Cooper	5	0	0
Mrs. France-Hayhurst	3	3	0
W. H. Macauley, Esq.	3	0	0
Walter Harter, Esq.	2	2	0
Mrs. Inman	2	2	0
M. Beaumont, Esq.	2	2	0
Chas. P. Greig, Esq.	2	2	0
Dr. Wm. Collier	2	2	0
Miss E. S. Pickersgill-Cunliffe	2	2	0
Capt. & Mrs. C. R. Curtis	2	2	0
Miss Edith Thompson	2	2	0
Dr. W. W. Floyer	2	2	0
'B. M. R.'	2	2	0
Mrs. King	2	2	0
Dean of Peterborough	2	2	0
Hon. Henry S. Littleton	2	2	0
Mrs. M. Stewart	2	0	6
Mrs. A. Dyson Cooper	2	0	0
Vice-Admiral C. Johnstone	2	0	0
C. J. L. Cottle, Esq.	2	0	0
Sir Thomas Barlow	2	0	0
Mrs. A. L. Payne	2	0	0
Miss Warburg	2	0	0
G. E. Lloyd Baker, Esq.	2	0	0
Maj. C. M. Barlow	2	0	0

THE ADVENTURE OF WRANGEL ISLAND

	£	s.	d.
'G. B. C.'	2	0	0
Mrs. A. S. Nicoll	1	1	0
Capt. Ernest G. Marden	1	1	0
Anonymous	1	1	0
Miss E. M. Phillips	1	1	0
P. M. Steib, Esq.	1	1	0
Miss K. Liberty	1	1	0
Mrs. Sinclair (In memory of the Heroes of Capt Scott's last expedition)	1	1	0
Mrs. Marrian Perry	1	1	0
'E. W. K.' - Golders Green	1	1	0
John B. Wainewright, Esq.	1	1	0
'A. F. T.'	1	1	0
The Misses White	1	1	0
Capt. M. R. Yeo, R.M.	1	1	0
Vice-Admiral V. H. G. Bernard	1	1	0
Lady Parkin	1	1	0
Dr. Wm. C. Haswell	1	1	0
Mrs. Aitken	1	1	0
Mrs. Chambers	1	1	0
A. E. Lidgett, Esq.	1	1	0
W. H. Wale, Esq.	1	1	0
C. C. Coffey, Esq.	1	1	0
Mrs. Taylor	1	1	0
R. B. Ransford, Esq.	1	1	0
Dr. H. C. H. Bull	1	0	0
C. D. Steel, Esq.	1	0	0
R. H. Fletcher, Esq.	1	0	0
W. F. Masterman, Esq.	1	0	0
Mrs. Sandwith	1	0	0
'S. T. H.'	1	0	0
Anonymous, X. Y.	1	0	0
Mrs. Hope Pinker	1	0	0
Miss D. C. Sinclair	1	0	0
Misses H. & M. Richmond	1	0	0
Morton Latham, Esq.	1	0	0
Miss M. M. Schuster	1	0	0

THE WRANGEL ISLAND RELIEF

	£	s.	d.
Mrs. Schuster	1	0	0
Anonymous, 'M.'	1	0	0
Miss J. M. F. Marshall	1	0	0
Anonymous	1	0	0
'E. M. S.'	1	0	0
Miss A. Raleigh	1	0	0
F. Penrose, Esq.	1	0	0
F. F. Simpson, Esq.	1	0	0
Arthur R. Hyde, Esq.	1	0	0
'C. S. T.'	1	0	0
Anonymous	1	0	0
Mrs. Bagshawe	1	0	0
W. M. Lindley, Esq.	1	0	0
A. Bourke, Esq.	1	0	0
Mrs. Adams	1	0	0
H. Y. L. Smith, Esq.	1	0	0
Flt.-Lieut. H. McKenna	1	0	0
Lt.-Col. D. G. Crawford	1	0	0
G. B. Murgatroyd, Esq.	10	6	
Miss A. I. M. Elliot	10	6	
'M. T.'	10	6	
Edwin Gray, Esq.	10	0	
D. D. McM.	10	0	
'E. L. C.'	10	0	
N. de G. Davies, Esq.	10	0	
'M. A. E.'	10	0	
Miss M. T. Baker	10	0	
Anonymous	10	0	
'M. W.'	10	0	
H. C. Luke, Esq.	10	0	
Two well-wishers	7	6	
N. K. Martyn, Esq.	5	0	
Anonymous	5	0	
Deficiency paid by Griffith Brewer	570	11	6

£2,362 8 0

THE ADVENTURE OF WRANGEL ISLAND

I cannot sufficiently express my gratitude for the generous contributions acknowledged above, and these are all the more appreciated because they were given after the *Donaldson* had actually sailed from Nome, and were therefore given to relieve me from the burden of bearing the entire cost of the rescue.

Unfortunately the expedition was too late to save Crawford and his three companions, but it was the means of saving the Eskimo woman and of disclosing the whole tragedy. The effort was therefore well worth while.

Again please accept my thanks for your kind suggestion to publish this letter.

Yours very sincerely,

GRIFFITH BREWER

33 CHANCERY LANE,

LONDON, W.C.2

July 15th, 1924.

THE ARCTIC IN OUR MIDST

Information compiled and map drafted under the direction of Mr. Stefansson



MAP OF THE NORTHERN HEMISPHERE

A map giving one view of the northern half of the world shows that the so-called Arctic Ocean is really a mediterranean sea like those which separate Europe from Africa or North America from South America. Because of its smallness, we would do well to go back to an Elizabethan custom and call it not the Arctic Ocean but the Polar Sea or Polar Mediterranean. The map shows that most of the land in the world and most of the people are in the northern hemisphere, and that the Polar sea is like a hub from which the continents radiate like the spokes of a wheel. The white patch shows that the part of the polar sea never yet navigated by ships is small when compared to the surrounding land masses. When navigation of the air by airplanes, and especially by dirigibles, becomes customary, the (at first) uninhabited Arctic will be like an open park in the centre of the inhabited world, and the air voyagers will cross it like taxi riders crossing a city park. Then will the Arctic islands become valuable, first as way stations and later because of their intrinsic value—minerals, grazing, fisheries, etc.

On this map the navigable ocean is blue and the part of the Polar Sea not yet navigated is white. The railways shown are only those lying nearest the Arctic at present. All cities having more than a million inhabitants are given in bold-faced type. Certain strategic smaller cities are given in smaller type.

The inevitable distortion on a map of this projection can be measured by the lengthening degrees of latitude approaching the Equator. The distortion of the temperate zone as compared with the arctic is slight; that of the tropical section is much greater.

Approximate flying routes between such cities as New York and Tokio, London and Tokio, Chicago and Calcutta, can be found by laying a straight-edge on the map between them. This shows the saving in distance and time by using the trans-Arctic route, if, as Stefansson believes, flying conditions will average as good over the Arctic as over, say, the North Atlantic.

ARGENT IN OUR

possessions



[illegible]



YORK
UNIVERSITY
LIBRARIES

BOOK CARD

YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE
FOR THE LOSS OF THIS CARD

31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60
61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80

COPY
NO.

SUBJECT
CODE

